



# **Walking Together for Reconciliation and Allyship in Bendigo**

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## **BENDIGO RECONCILIATION COMMITTEE AND ALLYSHIP ACTION PLAN 2025-2030**

We acknowledge the Traditional Owners of this Country, the Dja Dja Wurrung and Taungurung People, who have lived on these traditional lands and cared for Country over many thousands of years. We acknowledge the living culture and their unique role in the life of this region. We give respect to their Elders, past, present, and emerging.

We recognise that there are people from many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Communities living in Greater Bendigo. We acknowledge and extend our appreciation to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples who live and reside in Greater Bendigo on Dja Dja Wurrung Country, and we thank them for their contribution to our community and to those who contributed to this plan.



# What Guides Our Work?

## What we have we been asked to do

- Listen to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People and elevate their voices
- Address racism and raise awareness of privilege
- Advocate for the value and expertise of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People's work and cultural practice/ways
- Provide practical support
- Know the right time to ask questions
- Recognise the cultural load and its impact
- Actively contribute to reconciliation rather than just consume Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People's Culture

## Our Principles

- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People make decisions when it comes to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander matters. 'Nothing about us, without us'.
- Respect and recognise the rights of the Dja Dja Wurrung and Taungurung People as Traditional Owners/Custodians.
- That we are guided by and work in collaboration with DJAARA, BDAC, other local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations and the First People's Assembly - including the Yoorrook commission and Treaty process.
- For people that are not Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People, that as individuals, we are responsible for our own education, self-reflection and the role we play as allies.

## What's already happening?

The path of self-determination, truth telling, reconciliation and allyship is a long one. There are many existing activities that this action plan will use as resources and to build upon. Some of these activities have been listed in Appendix One.



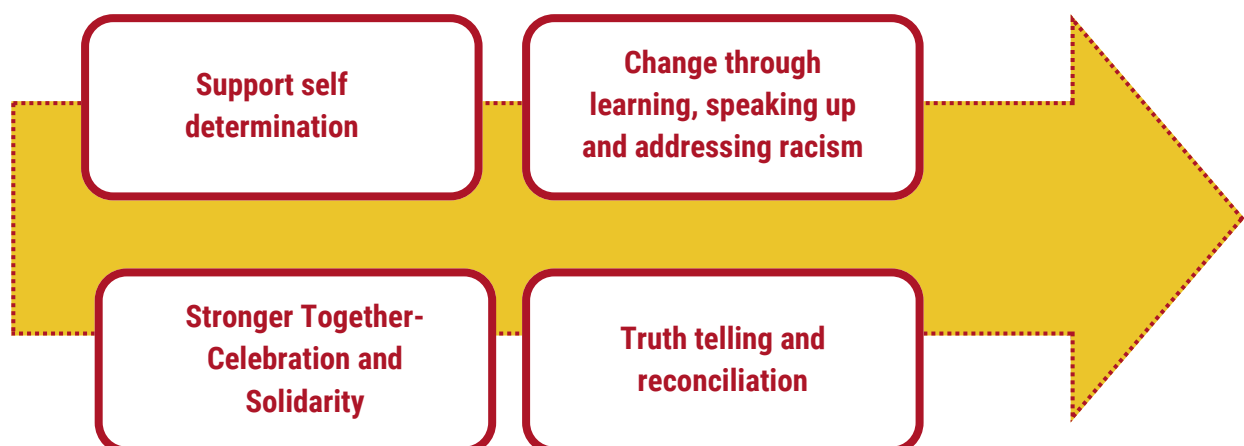
# Background

The Bendigo Reconciliation Committee (BRC) has been in place for over 10 years with various iterations of the group prior to this. The membership consists primarily of organisational representation, however, in recent years its membership has grown with more individuals becoming involved. BRC's main focus has been encouraging organisations to become more involved in the reconciliation movement and to drive organisational change through cultural and privilege self-reflection sessions. The City of Greater Bendigo (COGB) has played a key role in the past few years in supporting BRC activities in line with the COGB Reconciliation Plan (Barpangu).

In 2023 a referendum was held for a Voice to Parliament for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People. Many individuals from the broader community were involved in the campaign and observed the misinformation and racism that was evident in the region and the nation.

This Action Plan is a result of several community workshops held in 2024 to reflect on and build actions in response to the outcomes of the Voice Referendum. Prior to these workshops, we heard from local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Community members about the type of actions and approaches that individuals should be thinking about. This includes what we have been asked to do in the past such as from Aunty Steff Armstrong, a long-standing member of and former Bendigo Reconciliation Committee (BRC) Co-chair, and in the context of the First People's Assembly and Yoorrook.

## What are we trying to achieve?





# How can we effect change and have impact?

We recognise that action occurs on a number of levels. As individuals, within our organisations, and together as a collective. We have used these levels within our action plan. The BRC will use the actions we have identified together to inform meeting agendas and for annual planning.

ME	ORGANISATIONS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Continue to build my own knowledge and awareness and ways to challenge myself</li><li>• Connect with and support others in active reconciliation and anti-racism</li><li>• Talk with others and invite them to walk with me/us</li><li>• Identify and use every opportunity to influence those in power and call out racism</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Work to grow my own influence where I work</li><li>• Actively advocate for leadership and growing support including financial support</li><li>• Commit to active connection, partnership and encouragement</li><li>• Find where I can lead in small and larger ways</li></ul>
TOGETHER AS A COLLECTIVE	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Prioritise connecting, listening, practical support, advocacy and action</li><li>• Commit to showing up for and supporting regular meetings, cultural activities and events</li><li>• Learn from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Community, stories and each other</li><li>• Identify ways and opportunities to effect change in others and the way we live</li><li>• Connect with and invite other groups and individuals to join us as we learn and grow (See Appendix Two for a list of some of these groups)</li><li>• Learn from historical change and encourage each other to keep momentum, morale and focus</li></ul>	



# Our Action Plan

## Supporting Self-Determination and Treaty

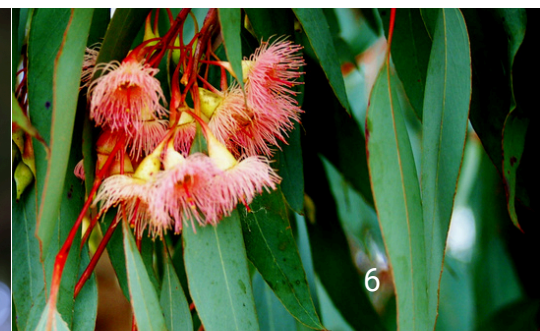
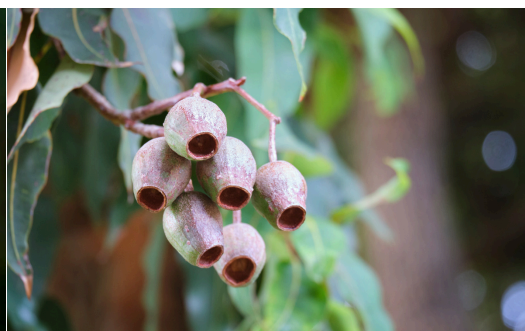
I WILL	MY ORGANISATION WILL
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Be an active supporter of Treaty and inform others.</li> <li>• Follow the Treaty and Yoorrook Commission activities.</li> <li>• Be guided by existing strategies (eg DJAARA, BDAC), especially when Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People are not represented in the room</li> <li>• Plant culturally sensitive species</li> <li>• Buy from and support authentic Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander businesses.</li> <li>• Pay the Rent. See <a href="https://paytherent.net.au">https://paytherent.net.au</a></li> <li>• Advocate within my organisation regarding self-determination and Treaty.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Endorse and advocate for funding of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations so they are based on Community-led priorities and self-determined.</li> <li>• Work with local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and organisations to consider how our work and partnerships foster self-determination, cultural safety and ensure identified roles are fit for purpose.</li> <li>• Ensure employment practices support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff and Identified roles to feel safe, not overloaded and not expect these individuals to be the knowledge holders.</li> <li>• Support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander businesses, especially local, for procurement and consider wealth redistribution such as Pay the Rent.</li> <li>• Make a public pledge to support Treaty for Victoria.</li> <li>• Know and use correct terminology.</li> </ul>
TOGETHER WE WILL	
<p><b><i>In year 1 and 2 we will:</i></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Be a point of contact for information and connection.</li> <li>• Develop (in consultation with DJAARA, TLaWC and BDAC) a guide for organisations based on the actions identified that support their RAPs, practices and partnership opportunities.</li> <li>• Support Treaty through awareness, education, and widespread pledges for Treaty for Victoria.</li> </ul> <p><b><i>In 3 to 5 years we will:</i></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continue to review and determine our actions based on what we are being asked to do from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People / Community</li> <li>• Continue to highlight what we have been asked to do.</li> </ul>	



# Our Action Plan

## Stronger Together – Celebration and Solidarity

I WILL	MY ORGANISATION WILL
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Embrace diversity and culture in entertainment and arts; more stories more understanding.</li><li>• Show up and bring a friend.</li><li>• Buy and support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People's art and literature and encourage others to do the same.</li><li>• Support local events including reconciliation and NAIDOC.</li><li>• Use and encourage local language (with approval from DJAARA and TlaWC) including using local place names.</li><li>• Offer and give more overt and ongoing support, not just during reconciliation week or campaigns.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Implement practical application of policies for diversity, inclusion, anti-racism and access.</li><li>• Facilitate access to cultural programs on Djandak (Country).</li><li>• Be visibly welcoming through flags, plaques and artwork.</li><li>• Adopt the black calendar dates that are important to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People (encourage local activities within sporting events etc).</li><li>• Fund NAIDOC and Reconciliation activities and avoid any financial burden on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations.</li></ul>
TOGETHER WE WILL	
<p><b><i>In year 1 and 2 we will:</i></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Support organisations in practical application of policies through shared knowledge and group support.</li><li>• Facilitate access and opportunities for cultural programs On Country.</li><li>• Capitalise on mainstream events such as Easter Fair and use opportunities for awareness, celebration and promotion.</li></ul> <p><b><i>In 3 to 5 years we will:</i></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Explore Dja Dja Wurrung country maps knowing boundaries land Council negotiations and knowing which land to acknowledge.</li><li>• Work with DJAARA to explore greater use of language locally.</li></ul>	



# Our Action Plan

## Change through learning, speaking up and addressing racism

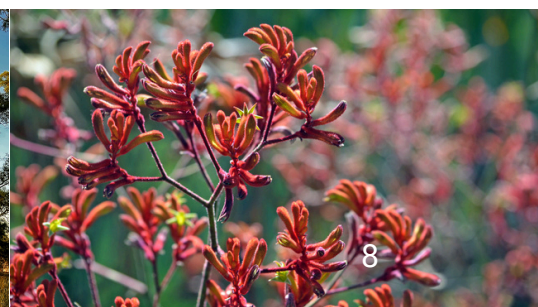
Increase awareness of the impact of racism, privilege and continued trauma

I WILL	MY ORGANISATION WILL
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Call out racism in a safe way that doesn't cause more harm.</li><li>• Report racist actions through: 'Call it out'.</li><li>• Upskill myself to address racism with friends, family and as a bystander.</li><li>• Share knowledge and learn from each other; start a book/ film club, share books, and other sources information.</li><li>• Learn about cultural load and let it inform our actions.</li><li>• Learn about intergenerational trauma, stolen generation, and systemic injustices, and their impact on communities.</li><li>• Advocate within our organisations regarding anti-racism actions and self-reflection on white privilege and racism.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Mandate Aboriginal or Traditional Owner controlled cultural awareness training as well as anti-racism/ self-reflection sessions.</li><li>• Make expectations clear from recruitment onwards about cultural safety, code of conduct and be proactive in reducing racism, rather than reactive.</li></ul>
TOGETHER WE WILL	
<p><b><i>In year 1 and 2 we will:</i></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Develop centralised resources to share knowledge, including booklists such as children's books, local truth-telling education and documentaries.</li><li>• Resource and train people and organisations on how to address racism and reflect on culture and privilege, ideally in collaboration with DJAARA and/or BDAC.</li><li>• Expand the self-reflection program that considers culture and privilege by building a pool of facilitators and seek funding to expand the reach and partnership opportunities.</li></ul> <p><b><i>In 3 to 5 years we will:</i></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Develop a long term training and self reflection plan that includes who we want to reach, who we can partner with, what advocacy looks like and how we foster conversations within the broader community.</li><li>• Leverage opportunities to collaborate with multicultural and multi faith groups in anti-racism and education.</li></ul>	

# Our Action Plan

## Truth Telling and Reconciliation

I WILL	MY ORGANISATION WILL
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Engage in self-education and learning, with purpose.</li> <li>Deepen the practice of Acknowledgement of Country so it comes from the heart and includes truth telling where appropriate. Have confidence, without fear of getting it wrong. Model best practice for others.</li> <li>Display Dja Dja Wurrung traditional owner acknowledgement plaques on my home and encourage others to do the same.</li> <li>Advocate within my work/ groups/ organisations on issues such as January 26th public holiday, history and massacre sites.</li> <li>Question organisations about their cultural safety and support of self-determination when applying for jobs.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Examine our own history and what negative impact on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people may have occurred in the past or still today.</li> <li>Include truth telling as part of organisational practice, staff education and reflection.</li> <li>Ensure our Reconciliation Action Plans (RAPs) reflect what we have been asked to do.</li> <li>Encourage organisations and businesses to display acknowledgement plaques.</li> </ul>
TOGETHER WE WILL	
<p><b><i>In year 1 and 2 we will:</i></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Confirm from Traditional Owners if they endorse home plaques and if so explore a collective order.</li> <li>Continue to use local reconciliation/ solidarity groups to strengthen our work and have a safe space.</li> <li>Consult with DJAARA and BDAC to consider a 'Walk of Solidarity/ Truth Telling Walk'.</li> <li>Acknowledge positive actions by local businesses, services and large organisations.</li> </ul> <p><b><i>In 3 to 5 years we will:</i></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Advocate for massacre site and local history commemoration.</li> <li>The 'Walk of solidarity/ Truth Telling Walk' if endorsed becomes an entrenched annual event.</li> </ul>	





## Appendix One: Local activities already occurring

SELF-DETERMINATION AND TREATY	STRONGER TOGETHER - CELEBRATION AND SOLIDARITY
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• DJAARA's enterprises and agreements in business, art, land management and financial retribution.</li> <li>• BDAC, working with funders to determine priorities and grow services being provided to mob locally.</li> <li>• Koori Shout Out Radio on Phoenix.</li> <li>• Building and supporting partnerships with DJAARA and BDAC – and many agencies such as CFA, DEECA, local government.</li> <li>• Local activities to support First People's Assembly, Treaty and Yoorrook.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• On Country tours and training including Uncle Rick Nelson's Waaman Tours, and Dumawul.</li> <li>• Djaa Djuwima and the increase in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people's art (e.g Djaara lights)</li> <li>• Greater representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in media and making art/ media.</li> <li>• Increase in overt displays of allegiance by wearing and displaying First Nation's art, clothing, design.</li> <li>• Increased acknowledgement of and visual culture in organisations and schools.</li> <li>• Aboriginal place naming supported by CoGB.</li> </ul>
CHANGE THROUGH LEARNING, SPEAKING UP AND ADDRESSING RACISM	TRUTH TELLING AND RECONCILIATION
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• BDAC and DJAARA cultural awareness training program</li> <li>• Organisational self-reflection sessions on culture and privilege.</li> <li>• Local book clubs and discussions around truth telling.</li> <li>• Treaty and First People's Assembly speaking at schools, organisations and community groups.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Growing the BRC and smaller local and regional groups and increase in active allies.</li> <li>• Organisational RAPs and reflections</li> <li>• CoGB support of Survival Day events and moving citizen ceremonies away from Jan 26th.</li> <li>• Reconciliation Week activities e.g. film festivals</li> <li>• Bendigo RSL: ANZAC Day recognition of Aboriginal contribution.</li> <li>• Victorian and Australian education curriculums that includes Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples perspectives.</li> </ul>



## Appendix Two: Who do we need to work with to effect change?

- Sporting groups
- Local building and construction industries
- TAFE and university students
- Private sector
- Local and broader media
- Rural and small communities
- Real estate agents
- Interfaith groups and activities.
- The intersection between multiculturalism, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People and the shared experience of racism.
- Police and judicial system
- Local leaders within systems that can represent their sector/ organisation/ department and work with grassroots.



### ACRONYMS, TRADING NAMES AND LINKS

- BDAC: Bendigo and District Aboriginal Co-operative
- DJAARA: The Dja Dja Wurrung Clans Aboriginal Corporation (trading as DJAARA)
- TAFE: Technical and Further Education
- TlaWC: Taungurung Land and Waters Council was registered 16 July 2009 as the Registered Aboriginal Party that represents the interests of the Taungurung people.
- NAIDOC: National Aborigines and Islanders Day Observance Committee
- BRC: Bendigo Reconciliation Committee

## Contacts

For further information about this Action Plan or the Bendigo Reconciliation and Allyship Group please contact: [info@bendigoreconciliationallyship.au](mailto:info@bendigoreconciliationallyship.au)

### **John Bonnice - Co-chair of the Bendigo Reconciliation Committee**

PH: 0419 330 799

### **Mim Dineen - Bendigo Reconciliation and Allyship member**

PH: 0419 422 927

