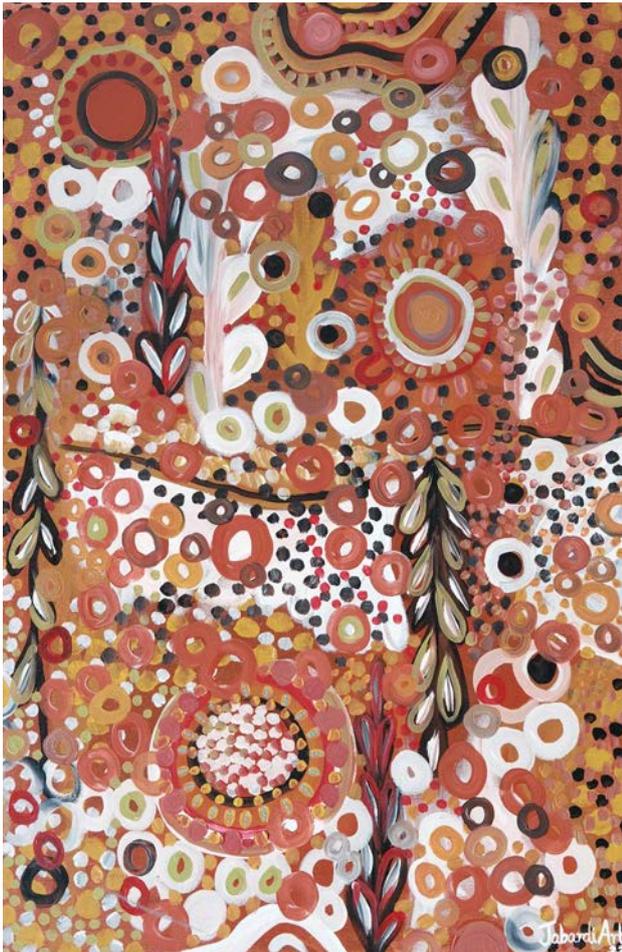


Gowrie Victoria Reflect RAP

SEPTEMBER 2022 – SEPTEMBER 2023





About the Artwork

“Birri” means “mother” and “booroo” means “earth”

Bardi language is complex and I have found the two words separately to express “mother earth”. However, I am not sure of the exact literate way to say the two words together - it may very well be different in regards to the complexity of the Bardi language and grammar.

Ultimately this piece is a clear indication of mother earth and the expressive strokes creating an appearance of nature and its depth. This piece has the environmental values at its fullest and is special to me because of its rawness whilst painting it and its natural colours.

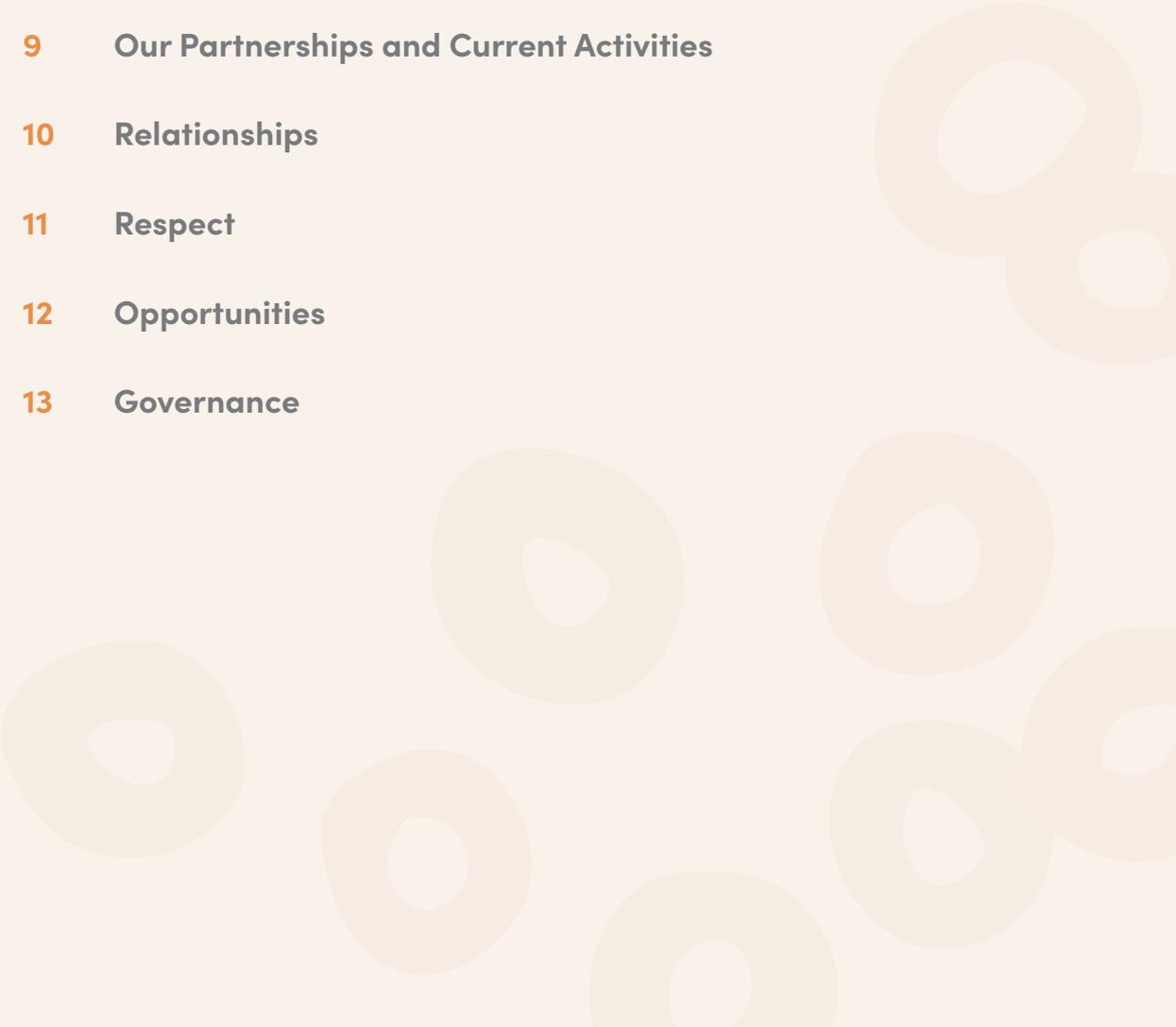
My people hunted on and ate food from the land. Kids would walk in these places swinging spears around as they journey through. All Aboriginal people have navigated harsh terrains and were survivors. It is vital to send a message that clearly expresses the need to prioritise our land today more than ever. It is vital to implement culture and the importance of the country that we all share and live in - to pay respects to our elders past and present and emerging and to always give thanks for what Mother Earth provides.

Created by Jamira Hunter

Bardi | Jabirr Jabirr woman from One Arm Point



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Our Vision

Gowrie Victoria's vision for reconciliation is a community where Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures are respected, celebrated and embraced. As educators, we believe we have a strong responsibility to nurture an understanding and appreciation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures in new generations of children. We strive to develop genuine, lasting relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and to embed learning about our shared history throughout our organisation and curriculum. In doing so, we dedicate ourselves to a future that reinforces the values of inclusiveness, equity and unity.



Our Business

Since 1939, Gowrie Victoria has been known as a leader in the early childhood education sector and a strong advocate for children. We believe that children flourish as active members of society, and place a high level of importance on developing strong partnerships with our families and communities. We enable children and adults to learn by doing, observing and reflecting.

Gowrie Victoria is a not-for-profit organisation. We operate six early learning services across Boon Wurrung, Wurundjeri and Woiwurrung lands (Broadmeadows, Yarraville, Docklands and Carlton), and offer accredited early childhood qualifications through our registered training organisation, as well as professional learning programs that include coaching, mentoring and customised training. We are proud of the role we've always played in training new educators, supporting educators' learning and development, and nurturing their potential.

Gowrie Victoria employs 320 (FTE) including educational professionals and support staff. Currently we are unaware of any staff who identify as an Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander person.

Gowrie Victoria is part of a consortium, Gowrie Australia, and our work involves participation in state and national forums to advance early education outcomes for children and families.



Message from Gowrie

We are honoured to present Gowrie Victoria's first Reconciliation Action Plan - Reflect. At Gowrie Victoria, we are deeply committed to a future that embraces the histories and cultures of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, as the traditional custodians of this land.

As leaders in the Early Childhood Education sector, we appreciate the responsibility we share in nurturing a rich understanding of First Nations' histories and cultures in our younger generations.

As part of a collective, we each have a role to play in acknowledging past wrongs and reinforcing our vision for reconciliation. We are all on our own personal journey of learning and understanding and, in many ways, this has aligned with the journey we are taking as an organisation.

Thank you to all members of the RAP working group who guided us through this process. And thank you to the team members who contribute to our community of practice groups: These groups drive meaningful change in embedding First Nations' perspectives into daily practice across each of our services.

We are incredibly proud to be part of a team that values reconciliation so highly. We are grateful for their dedication as they continue to build their own knowledge and strengthen their commitment to developing respectful relationships.

Our RAP reflects the Gowrie Victoria philosophy that children flourish as active members of society and we are so excited for our children, who are able to embrace and celebrate Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures, in a way we were never able to as children. It is so important and precious to nurture a new generation of children that can carry forward our vision for true reconciliation.

Susan Anderson
Chief Executive Officer

Paul Geyer
Chair



Message from Reconciliation Australia

Reconciliation Australia welcomes Gowrie Victoria to the Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) program with the formal endorsement of its inaugural Reflect RAP.

Gowrie Victoria joins a network of more than 1,100 corporate, government, and not-for-profit organisations that have made a formal commitment to reconciliation through the RAP program.

Since 2006, RAPs have provided a framework for organisations to leverage their structures and diverse spheres of influence to support the national reconciliation movement. The program's potential for impact is greater than ever, with close to 3 million people now working or studying in an organisation with a RAP.

The four RAP types – Reflect, Innovate, Stretch and Elevate – allow RAP partners to continuously develop and strengthen reconciliation commitments in new ways. This Reflect RAP will lay the foundations, priming the workplace for future RAPs and reconciliation initiatives.

The RAP program's strength is its framework of relationships, respect, and opportunities, allowing an organisation to strategically set its reconciliation commitments in line with its own business objectives, for the most effective outcomes.

These outcomes contribute towards the five dimensions of reconciliation: race relations; equality and equity; institutional integrity; unity; and historical acceptance.



It is critical to not only uphold all five dimensions of reconciliation, but also increase awareness of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, histories, knowledge, and leadership across all sectors of Australian society.

This Reflect RAP enables Gowrie Victoria to deepen its understanding of its sphere of influence and the unique contribution it can make to lead progress across the five dimensions. Getting these first steps right will ensure the sustainability of future RAPs and reconciliation initiatives, and provide meaningful impact toward Australia's reconciliation journey.

Congratulations Gowrie Victoria, welcome to the RAP program, and I look forward to following your reconciliation journey in the years to come.

Karen Mundine
Chief Executive Officer
Reconciliation Australia

Our RAP

The staff and community at Gowrie Victoria are deeply passionate about developing a Reconciliation Action Plan. We recognise our organisational responsibilities to work towards an equitable and united society, and we support the five dimensions of Reconciliation Australia: Race Relations, Equality and Equity, Institutional Integrity, Unity, Historical Acceptance.

Our RAP was developed by our Reconciliation Working Group, made up of 12 members, including First Australians. The RAP is championed by the CEO to ensure strong commitment and that the deliverables are prioritised across our organisation.

The Working Group was made up of:

- Family representatives
- Chief Executive Officer
- Team members from our Early Learning Services including educators, teachers, education leaders
- Early Years Consultant
- Pedagogy Leader
- Learning and Development Specialist
- Family and Curriculum Practitioner
- Early Learning Manager



We acknowledge that we have a responsibility to reflect upon our own practice and initiate change within our service if reconciliation is to be achieved. Developing a RAP is the best way to make meaningful progress in achieving this.

We aim to take a holistic, service-wide approach to drive authentic action that supports growth in key areas. This includes developing active and supportive relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and groups in our community to help implement this change.

As part of our RAP, we commit to deepening our understanding of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander heritage and endeavour to appreciate fully what it means to teach on Country. We strive to engage with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives to ensure these are embedded throughout our daily programs in a respectful and authentic manner.

We hope to play an integral role in helping children, their families and the wider community develop a deeper understanding of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander languages, histories, cultures and connections to Country.

Our vision is to build awareness and acceptance of past wrongs and to actively recognise Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as Traditional Custodians of these Lands we work on, and those across Australia. We want to do our part in ending negative race relations as we work towards sharing a rich national culture that embraces true and meaningful reconciliation.





Our Partnerships and Current Activities

At a practice level, our services have continuously strived to understand and engage with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander practices, allowing educators and children to incorporate language on spaces, celebrations and seasons into their daily activities.

Collaboration between the services has played a key role in sharing knowledge and challenging thinking. This has resulted in the implementation of firepits and On Country Kinder in the majority of our programs, allowing children to develop a deeper understanding of, and connection to, the land.

We recognise the need for early childhood environments to be one of the foundations to change thinking and promote respect and advocacy. Many of our staff have participated in professional development sessions to improve their own understanding and appreciation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories, cultures and connections to Country.

Our educators have attended events designed to spark ideas for moving towards a more socially just community. This includes attendance at the Early Childhood Australia Reconciliation Symposium, conferences held by Reconciliation Australia, and professional development sessions with Yarn Strong Sista. They have also attended Local Aboriginal Network meetings, NAIDOC Week celebrations, National Reconciliation Week celebrations, Hume Global Learning Centre Storytelling events, Welcome Baby to Country, and Boorais Playgroup.

The knowledge shared with children on authentic histories has seen our resources grow, with a commitment to buy from local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations, the visibility of flags within our services, and engaging in Acknowledgement of Country on a daily basis within all 0–5 programs across our services. We also connect with the Indigenous Education Centre at Kangan Institute for excursions with the children to the garden space.

Each service has a Community of Practice group with education professionals who meet monthly to discuss ways in which we can implement Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives, not only into our programs but in everything we do.

We are also committed to ensuring our organisation is culturally safe. As practice became embedded, we began to consider how to ensure families that identify as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander feel safe and are encouraged to access and connect with their chosen service. One of our services has been successful in gaining funding for a Koori Pre-School Assistant to engage with families and work with local communities. Our services also engage with Koori Engagement Support Officers, and the Aboriginal Engagement Team, which consists of Maternal Child Health nurses and an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Family Engagement Officer.

Relationships



Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
1. Establish and strengthen mutually beneficial relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and organisations.	Identify Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and organisations within our local area or sphere of influence.	October 2022	Early Learning Manager, <i>Carlton North, Carlton Learning Precinct</i>
	Research best practice and principles that support partnerships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and organisations.	October 2022	Senior Learning and Development Specialist
2. Build relationships through celebrating National Reconciliation Week (NRW). 27 May – 3 June, 2023	Circulate Reconciliation Australia's NRW resources and reconciliation materials to our staff.	May 2023	Executive Manager, <i>Adult Learning and Marketing</i>
	RAP Working Group members to participate in an external NRW event.	27 May – 3 June, 2023	RAP Working Group member, <i>Broadmeadows Valley</i>
	Encourage and support staff and senior leaders to participate in at least one external event to recognise and celebrate NRW.	27 May – 3 June, 2023	Chief Executive Officer
3. Promote reconciliation through our sphere of influence.	Communicate our commitment to reconciliation to all staff.	September 2022	Chief Executive Officer
	Identify external stakeholders that our organisation can engage with on our reconciliation journey.	October 2022	Pedagogical Leader
	Identify RAP and other like-minded organisations that we could approach to collaborate with on our reconciliation journey.	October 2022	Pedagogical Leader
	Host a link to Reconciliation Australia's Narragunnawali: Reconciliation in Education program on our website.	October 2022	Executive Manager, <i>Adult Learning and Marketing</i>
4. Promote positive race relations through anti-discrimination strategies.	Research best practice and policies in areas of race relations and anti-discrimination.	December 2022	Executive Manager, <i>People and Culture</i>
	Conduct a review of HR policies and procedures to identify existing anti-discrimination provisions, and future needs.	November 2022	Executive Manager, <i>People and Culture</i>

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.	Develop a business case for increasing understanding, value and recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, histories, knowledge and rights within our organisation.	October 2022	Senior Learning and Development Specialist
	Conduct a review of cultural learning needs within our organisation.	March 2023	Senior Learning and Development Specialist
6. Demonstrate respect to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples by observing cultural protocols.	Develop an understanding of the local Traditional Owners or Custodians of the lands and waters within our organisation's operational area.	September 2022	Early Learning Manager, <i>Carlton North, Carlton Learning Precinct</i>
	Increase staff's understanding of the purpose and significance behind cultural protocols, including Acknowledgement of Country and Welcome to Country protocols.	October 2022	Senior Learning and Development Specialist
7. Build respect for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and histories by celebrating NAIDOC Week. (July 2 – July 9 2023)	Raise awareness and share information amongst our staff about the meaning of NAIDOC Week.	June 2023	Senior Learning and Development Specialist
	Introduce our staff to NAIDOC Week by promoting external events in our local area.	June 2023	Senior Learning and Development Specialist
	RAP Working Group to participate in an external NAIDOC Week event.	First week in July, 2023	RAP Working Group member, <i>Carlton North</i>

Opportunities



Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
8. Improve employment outcomes by increasing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander recruitment, retention and professional development.	Develop a business case for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment within our organisation.	February 2023	Executive Manager, <i>People and Culture</i>
	Build understanding of current Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staffing to inform future employment and professional development opportunities.	December 2022	Executive Manager, <i>People and Culture</i>
9. Increase Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander supplier diversity to support improved economic and social outcomes.	Develop a business case for procurement from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander owned businesses.	October 2022	Executive Manager, <i>Commercial</i>
	Investigate Supply Nation membership.	November 2022	Executive Manager, <i>Commercial</i>

Governance



Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
10. Establish and maintain an effective RAP Working Group (RWG) to drive governance of the RAP.	Review the RWG to govern RAP implementation.	October 2022	Chief Executive Officer
	Review a Terms of Reference for the RWG.	October 2022	Senior Learning and Development Specialist
	Establish Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander representation on the RWG.	October 2022	Chief Executive Officer
11. Provide appropriate support for effective implementation of RAP commitments.	Define resource needs for RAP implementation.	September 2022	Chief Executive Officer
	Engage senior leaders in the delivery of RAP commitments.	September 2022	Chief Executive Officer
	Appoint a senior leader to champion our RAP internally.	September 2022	Chief Executive Officer
	Define appropriate systems and capability to track, measure and report on RAP commitments.	September 2022	Executive Manager, Commercial
12. Build accountability and transparency through reporting RAP achievements, challenges and learnings both internally and externally.	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.	September 2022	Senior Learning and Development Specialist
	Contact Reconciliation Australia to request our unique link, to access the online RAP Impact Measurement Questionnaire.	September 2022	Senior Learning and Development Specialist
	Complete and submit the annual RAP Impact Measurement Questionnaire to Reconciliation Australia.	30 September, 2022	Senior Learning and Development Specialist
13. Continue our reconciliation journey by developing our next RAP.	Register via Reconciliation Australia's website to begin developing our next RAP.	May 2023	Senior Learning and Development Specialist



For any enquiries contact

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