

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

St Mary's Primary School, Myrtleford

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

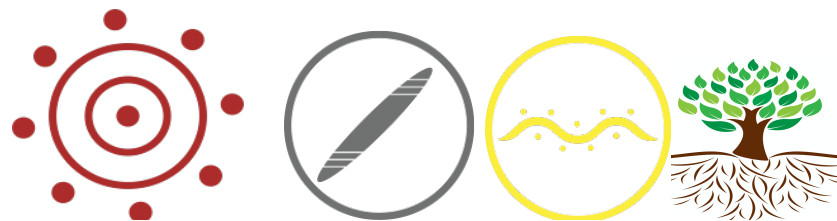
True Reconciliation requires national and local solutions achieved through positive and purposeful partnerships not just for today but for tomorrow. We work for Reconciliation, in partnership with those who believe that there can be an alternative to the present order.

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. (*Firecarriers Sandhurst.pdf*)

Our School

St Mary's Primary School is a hope filled and welcoming school with a rich Presentation Christian heritage. Our school promotes excellence and equality through our strong sense of interconnectedness with the local community for the mutual benefit of both the school and wider community. We challenge our students to think and act with courage and conviction and this enacting both creating and kindness. We aim to instil an understanding of the collective responsibility for building relationships, an appreciation of Reconciliation is fostered. In recognising this, we as a school community continue to actively pursue positive and purposeful partnerships not just for today, but for tomorrow.

The St Mary's Primary School Reconciliation Group will consist of both teachers and students. The students will come from a range of year levels and from both indigenous and non- indigenous backgrounds. The Reconciliation Group will be led by: Mrs Jo-Ann Bennett & School Principal: Mrs Katherine Hancock



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FIRE CARRIERS: Mrs Katherine Hancock, Mrs Gab Jackson, Mrs Jo-Ann Bennett, Mrs Cathy Jeffery, Ms Nicole Richardson, Mrs Anne Kerlin, Ms Ruth Lamb, Mrs Julie Humphreys, and Ms Carolyn Deith.

The FIRE Carrier Project (Friends Igniting Reconciliation through Education) is an initiative of *Victorian Aboriginal Catholic Ministry* and the *Opening the Doors Foundation*. The *Sandhurst CEO* encourages its schools to actively pursue Reconciliation. St Mary's Primary School aims to be an active participant in the Sandhurst Diocese Fire Carriers Project.

2022

Staff wishing to become FIRE Carriers will be commissioned in June, 2022.

Students will be nominated and inducted as FIRE Carriers at the beginning of Term 3, 2022.

Our Covenant

Our school community was presented with ideas for Reconciliation in our local community by the Sandhurst Catholic Education Office- Indigenous Education Officers, who were and are involved in the continuing development of our Covenant. This covenant has been developed by the St. Mary's Primary School staff and authorised by the Principal of the Primary School. The students in the school range from Foundation to Year Six.

FIRE Carrier Project

The FIRE Carrier Project is an initiative of the Aboriginal Catholic Ministry and the Opening the Doors Foundation with the Sandhurst CEO to promote and assist Reconciliation through Education in Victorian Schools.

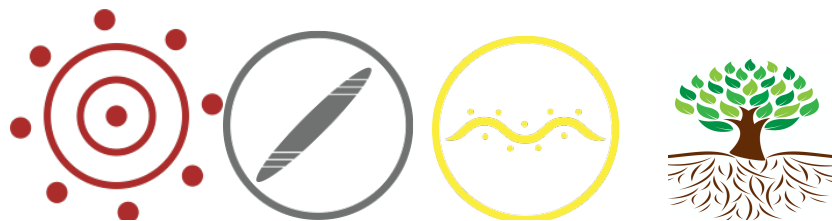
St. Mary's Primary School commits to completing or putting steps in place to complete all Actions through Measurable Targets outlined below. These will be completed by the dates set out in the timeline. A review at the end of the school year will be conducted and the plan will be updated and passed to the following year's FIRE Carrier at the Opening School Mass.

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)

The school (Doxa) 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.

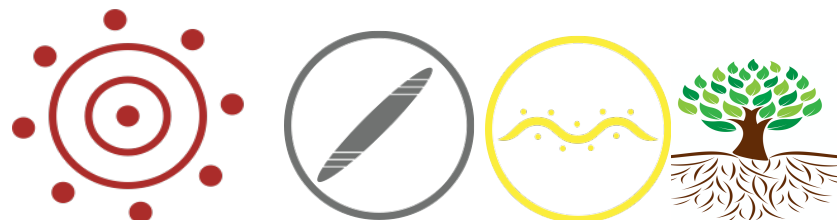


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5.1 Schools must establish culturally safe environments in which the diverse and unique identities and experiences of Aboriginal children, young people and students are respected and valued.

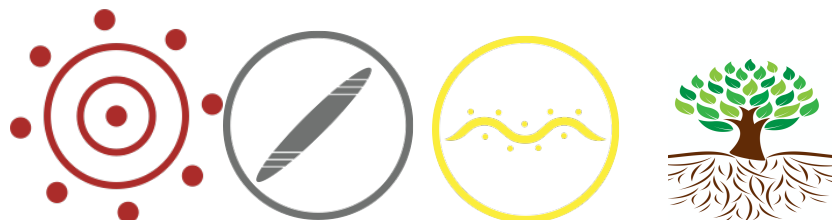
Actions

1. In endorsing and documenting the following activities contained within this FIRE Carrier covenant, Our School (Doxa) 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.



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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. ➤ 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. ➤ Introduce Richard Campbell's Stations of the Cross to the St Mary's community. ➤ Perform 'Turning of the Coolamon Ceremony' using the Coolamon Liturgy in a staff liturgy for Advent. ➤ Investigate possible resources to purchase for use in the school's Religious Education Program, to break open the Indigenous perspectives. ➤ Reading Dream Time stories appropriate to our Source of Life Units and Inquiry Units ➤ Investigate local Indigenous sites as possible excursion locations for all students.
Explore the significance of spirituality in Aboriginal art.	Jo	September 2022	
Create an Australian identity during time of Advent.	FIRE Carrier staff	November 2022	
	FIRE Carrier staff	September 2022	
Listen to Aboriginal Stories	All staff	Ongoing	
	FIRE Carrier staff	September 2022	

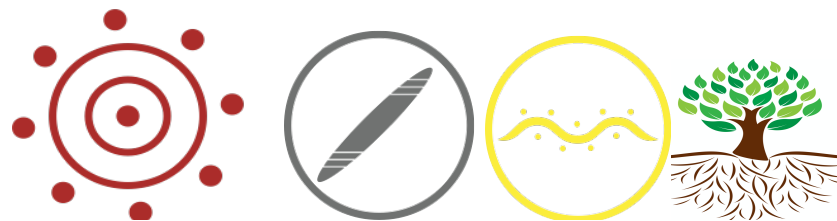


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Cultural Recognition & Awareness

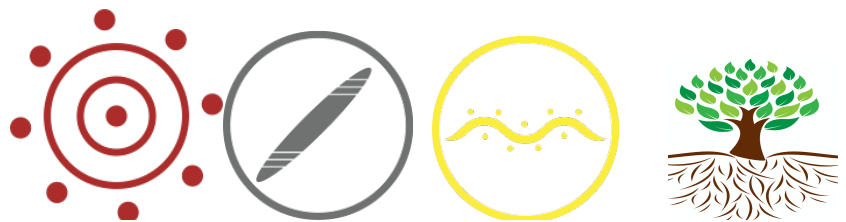
Focus Area: Recognise Cultural Perspectives, Demonstrate Awareness

Action	Responsibility	Timeline	Suggested Activities / Resources
Embrace Aboriginal stories and culture within school ceremonies.	Staff and students FIRE Carrier staff	Ongoing Term 4 2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Continue to Acknowledge Country at School Assemblies, gatherings and Masses. ➤ Make connections with local elders where possible. ➤ Maintain Aboriginal perspectives in curriculum through lines. ➤ Continue to Acknowledge Country on School website and school's printed material such as St. Mary's Staff Handbook, St. Mary's Parent Handbook and St. Mary's Annual Report. ➤ Continue to include the Acknowledgement of Country in the school foyer and newsletter. ➤ Annually elect FIRE Carriers and be involved with the Sandhurst Diocese ceremonies. ➤ Exhibit Fire Carrier Flame in prominent position- entry to the school Office. ➤ Educate the school community of the Aboriginal story of the land on which the school is situated. ➤ Identify Indigenous Perspective resources in the library. ➤ Display Aboriginal posters in classrooms or corridors. Develop, maintain and update a Reconciliation Board. ➤ Engage with local Aboriginal groups and organisations. ➤ Celebrate National Sorry Day and NAIDOC week ➤ Commemoration of National Government Apology.
Publicly display our schools respect for Aboriginal people.	All teachers All staff Jo/ Kitty	Ongoing Ongoing Ongoing	
Seek advice from ACM on cultural wisdom and seek knowledge of the local Aboriginal community.	Jo & Year 5/6 staff Jo	Term 3 2022 Ongoing	
	All teachers	Ongoing and 2022	
	FIRE Carrier staff & Lucia All staff	Ongoing Ongoing	
	All staff All staff All staff	2022 Annually Annually	



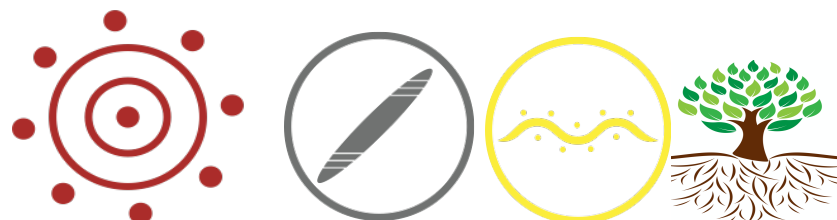
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Practical Reconciliation & Justice			
Focus Area: Walk the Journey together, Put Learnings into Practice			
Action	Responsibility	Timeline	Suggested Measureable Target
Take Practical Measures toward reconciliation and Justice	School leadership and FIRE Carriers	2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Have flag poles outside to display and maintain the Aboriginal Flag and Torres Strait Islander flag. Fly these flags every day. Purchase a flagpole to fly the Torres Strait Islander flag. ➤ Maintain the display for our Acknowledgement of Country. ➤ Embrace, connect with and listen to local Aboriginal Elders by inviting in a guest speaker from the local community. ➤ Aboriginal Our Father framed and in classrooms, learnt for liturgies, cited after the Acknowledgement of Country or the like, appropriate to ceremony. ➤ Acknowledgement of the Dhudhuroa & Waywuru Nations on our school website. Have our FIRE Carriers covenant on the school website. ➤ Implement the use of once-a-year cycle Aboriginal prayers on the bulletin. Explanation to staff. Make use of online resources and works from Aboriginal elders. ➤ Have an Indigenous perspective/ component on all camps. ➤ Acknowledgement of Country to be included in the school newsletter. Advertise (Newsletter) and encourage a strong school presence in community events e.g., Reconciliation Week, NAIDOC Week. ➤ Continual revising of the FIRE Carriers Covenant to ensure that we are adjusting it to suit the school. ➤ Encouraging Indigenous students from feeder kindergartens to attend St Mary's PS
	Jo	Ongoing	
	Each area & FIRE Carrier staff	2022/23	
	FIRE Carrier staff	Ongoing	
	All staff	Ongoing	
	Jo	2022	
	All staff	Ongoing	
	Jo/Lucia	Ongoing	
FIRE Carriers	Ongoing		
Principal	Ongoing		



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	All staff & FIRE Carrier staff	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Monitoring and improving Indigenous students' academic progress. If needed, accessing tutoring through Koori Educators.



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Ecological Stewardship.
Focus Area: Ecological renewal and sustainability depends upon spiritual awareness and an attitude of responsibility – Caring for country.

Action	Responsibility	Timeline	Suggested Measurable Target
Caring for country – learn about Aboriginal Spirituality Learn about totems – what is their importance to the environment?	Jo Jo and all staff	Term 2, 2022 By Term 4, 2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ All students Foundation to Year 6 will learn about the significance of our Message Stick and the meaning of symbols on it. ➤ Learning what totems mean to indigenous culture and the local environment.
Adopt a totem. Research animals or habitats that are endangered in your area.	Jo and all staff	By Term 4, 2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Adopt a local totem for our school to embrace and for all students to be educated about the importance of our totem. The students will create artwork displaying the totem. Echidna
Engage in Sandhurst switches off.	Jo	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ To participate in Sandhurst Switches off each year.
Use water wisely.	FIRE Carrier staff	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ To extend our water wise focus within the school.

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