

Reconciliation in action

Newsletter | Gowrie South Australia | 2021



Our second Stretch Reconciliation Action Plan launches with moving video

We proudly launched our second Stretch Reconciliation Action Plan in August this year with a moving video sharing the story of how we reached this stage of our journey. We received so many lovely comments about our launch from the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Community, from across the sector and members of parliament. Our video reached over 3000 people on Facebook.

If you have not had the opportunity to view this video, we encourage you to do so. You can find it on our YouTube channel [here](#). If you have seen it already, it loses none of its impact if watched again and we hope inspires you to take action for reconciliation.

Our stretch RAP can be found [here](#)

Welcome to our inaugural annual Reconciliation in Action newsletter.

We are proud to share our actions for reconciliation and commitment to a just, inclusive, equitable and culturally respectful society.

Celebrating National Reconciliation Week

Gowrie SA annual reconciliation walk

Each year Gowrie SA staff, their families and the children and families from our children's program are invited to our annual Reconciliation Walk. This year we spent a wonderful morning with Elders Ivan-Tiwu Copley (OAM) and Eddie Peters at the Adelaide Botanic Gardens.

Uncle Ivan shared his knowledge of Kurna and Peramangk culture during a walk through the gardens, explaining the significance of Karrawirra Pari and First Creek, the Sheoak trees and how Kurna children would collect herbs and berries from the gardens for bread and biscuits.

Uncle Eddie entertained and shared his knowledge of traditional dance, songs and instruments and helped us learn more about Torres Strait Islander cultures and peoples.

Children's Program activities

Each room in our children's program is a bustle of activity during National Reconciliation Week.

This year we recorded children's and families' comments on what reconciliation means to them, attended the Reconciliation in the West event at Tauondi College, welcomed Aboriginal storyteller Trent Hill to talk about the cultural importance of fire, explored the NRW artwork symbols, planted bush tucker, created a community necklace in collaboration with families and took part in weaving the Wardli with the colours of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander flags. We shared the story of our community necklace on social media and reached almost 11,000 people!



Supporting staff to attend significant events

Each year staff are supported to attend significant events on behalf of Gowrie SA. This year several staff attended the Anniversary of the Apology breakfast, National Reconciliation Week breakfast, Reconciliation in the West, Sorry Day, and NAIDOC and Nunga Week events. Staff also attend Turkindi meetings and the Turkindi expo. Staff are encouraged to reflect on, and share their experience with members of our Reconciliation Action Plan Working Group and their colleagues.





Connecting children with community and culture

We continue to work to strengthen our relationships with Elders and members of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community, who provide a significant amount of support to the organisation and to the work of our educators. We are fortunate to have regular visits from Elders Ivan-Tiwu Copley (OAM), Major 'Moogy' Sumner (AM) and Eddie Peters, each of whom spend time throughout the year sharing their knowledge, cultures and histories in a way that is immersed in the children's everyday life and experience, supporting their current interests and research projects.

Children spent time with Ivan painting with ochre, making and painting clay dice and then using the dice to engage in learning, including learning the games he played as a child. He also spent time in the kindergarten sharing the story of Nganu the Giant, the creation story that the children have been exploring. Major 'Moogy' Sumner shared his knowledge of symbols with educators and children and together they spent time drawing and painting these symbols.



Dance group Kuma Kaaru performs for our children's program

To celebrate Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children's Day, dance group Kuma Kaaru (One Blood) gave a Welcome to Country and dance performance at our Underdale and Thebarton campuses.

The children and staff were excited to join in and learn more about culture through dance and movement. We also learnt some new Kurna words to include in our programs.

The children were thrilled to watch one of their educators perform in the dance group!

Nurturing a love of culture

Two of our Thebarton children's program staff members collaborated to publish an article on the work that the children's program has been doing with Elders to support nurturing a love of culture with staff and children. This article featured experiences undertaken with Elder Ivan-Tiwu Copley (OAM) who

regularly spends time with the children, linking culture with their research projects. The article wonderfully highlights how we are enriching our programs with culturally responsive pedagogy. This article can be read [here](#).



Sharing our learning

Nunga week presentation

On invitation, Gowrie SA took part in the City of Port Adelaide and Enfield Nunga Week celebrations with a presentation titled 'Reconciliation in Action'.

We shared our reconciliation journey, beginning with Aunty Brodie as an Elder in Residence, and how our learnings have been threaded throughout our children's program and committed to in our Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP).

This presentation gave organisations with a RAP, and those considering a RAP, an insight into how culture can have an intrinsic role in early childhood and the leadership required to embed Reconciliation into an organisation.

Shona Reid, Reconciliation SA's Chief Executive Officer, recorded a video to share during our presentation. In this video, Shona talks about how reconciliation requires us to explore and have conversations about our relationships with First Nations peoples, individually and as an organisation.

Supporting the sector

In partnership with Reconciliation SA and others, Gowrie SA contributed funding towards the 2021 [Reconciliation Education Activities Grants](#). Our own NAIDOC week grants were provided to two Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander services for their NAIDOC week celebrations.

Our professional learning team provided guidance and support to the Campbelltown Community Children's Centre during the development of their first RAP and we are thrilled their [RAP](#) has been endorsed by Reconciliation Australia.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Reference Group

We extend our sincere thanks to members of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Reference Group, who provide our organisation with cultural advice and guidance based on a wealth of knowledge and experience.

This group meets four times a year to advise and guide us on the way we embed culture in our programs, including the appropriateness and cultural risks of our activities, so that our organisation can continue to strive to be culturally safe and respectful.

"Change in a generation. That's what Gowrie SA does."

Shona Reid. Chief Executive Officer Reconciliation SA.

If our relationship with First Nations peoples isn't one of trust and respect, or isn't healthy, how can we change this relationship?

It is here that Shona states the Reconciliation Action Plans can offer guidance and help us take action so that there are meaningful outcomes for community.

Shona summed up Gowrie SA's actions for reconciliation beautifully, describing it as 'bringing community and culture closer to kids'. In our position as early education providers we work towards generational social change, with children taking their learnings about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and histories with them throughout their

MEMBERS

Ivan-Tiwu Copley (OAM)

Eddie Peters

Nicole Gollan

Rodney Welch

Rosemary Wanganeen

Karrl Tamaru Smith



Increasing staff understanding, value and recognition of First Nations cultures, histories, knowledge and rights

All Gowrie SA staff take part in ongoing cultural learning. Our cultural learning strategies ensure our learning includes the true history of our nation, historical practices and policies, white privilege, racism, rights, cultural competence, truth telling and contemporary perspectives of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples.

Our last closure day of the year was spent with Rosemary Wanganeen from the Healing Centre for Griefology, who facilitated Aboriginal Bi-Cultural Awareness Training - Safety for Inclusion. This was an incredible day of unlearning and learning for staff. Rosemary took us on a journey to connect emotionally with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, their experiences and to understand intergenerational unresolved grief, and in particular, 'grief fear'.

During this session we were provided with strategies that we could practice to create culturally safe workplaces.



Promoting reconciliation and our commitment to important initiatives

In August this year, Lynne Rutherford, Gowrie SA Chief Executive Officer, emailed 20 politicians to promote the Uluru Statement from the Heart as well as providing a written response to the Indigenous Voice Co-design Interim Report, endorsing the importance of acknowledging and implementing an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander voice to parliament.

“A National Voice has the potential to become a normal part of children’s future and will give Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children a sense of agency, pride and confidence.”



We hope that our newsletter has provided insight into our actions for reconciliation and that it inspires you to take action at an individual or personal level. To follow our reconciliation journey, follow us on Facebook, Instagram and LinkedIn!