Goldfields Libraries

Reflect Reconciliation Action Plan January 2024–January 2025









Statement from CEO of Reconciliation Australia

Inaugural Reflect RAP

Reconciliation Australia welcomes Goldfields Library Corporation to the Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) program with the formal endorsement of its inaugural Reflect RAP.

Goldfields Library Corporation joins a network of more than 2,500 corporate, government, and not-forprofit 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 Goldfields Library Corporation 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 Goldfields Library Corporation, 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 BUSINESS

Goldfields Library Corporation delivers public library services to the Council areas of Greater Bendigo, Mount Alexander, Macedon Ranges and Loddon on Dja Dja Wurrung, Taungurung, Wurundjeri and Barapa Barapa land. We employ around 100 staff to serve a population of almost 180,000 people with the eLibrary, 9 library branches, and 8 library agencies. We are privileged to serve these diverse communities across 13,000km² of Central Victoria.

Goldfields Libraries currently have no known or identified Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff.

Branches:

- Bendigo Library
- Castlemaine Library
- Eaglehawk Library
- Gisborne Library
- Heathcote Library
- Kangaroo Flat Library
- Kyneton Library
- Romsey Library
- Woodend Library

Agencies:

- Axedale Library Agency
- Boort Library Agency
- Dingee Library Agency
- Elmore Library Agency
- Inglewood Library Agency
- Pyramid Hill Library Agency
- Tarnagulla Library Agency
- Wedderburn Library Agency





OUR RAP

Goldfields Libraries has identified the acknowledgement and celebration of our First Nations People as a priority for our organisation. This has been reflected in the 2021-2025 Goldfields Libraries Strategy.

In developing and implementing a Reconciliation Action Plan, we will deepen our connection with First Nations cultures, peoples and perspectives by continually educating our staff, reshaping our approach to library services that reflect a culturally safe and competent organisation, and supporting the public library sector in state and national changes to collection management.

As a public library service, we value the importance of being a safe, welcoming and inclusive community space, and for the First Nations People of this country, we respect the focussed approach that will be required from us to achieve this.

Actions from the RAP will be written into each service area's functional plan, and reported on quarterly by individual services to the Leadership Team and Board. Collectively, as an organisation, these reports will feed into the Annual Report and Library Plan Action Updates presented to the public.

Thus far in our reconciliation journey, we were fortunate to have commissioned a cultural audit of our major library service, Bendigo Library, by Simon Briggs, a Yorta Yorta and Wurundjeri man. This report provided us with a list of recommendations to improve the cultural safety of our space, collection and overall service. This audit has been referred to over the years to assist in the development of an Acknowledgement of Country policy, Acknowledgement of Country plaques at each site, a variety of cultural competency and safety training for staff, increased number of collection items by First Nations authors across age groups and genres and improved visual representation in library spaces through the use of commissioned Indigenous artwork, soft furnishings and the loan of Possum Skin Cloaks to present on display. From these piecemeal activities, the Goldfields Libraries Leadership Team became more convinced that a Reconciliation Action Plan was required to formalise our approach to reconciliation and achieve greater outcomes for our communities.

OUR PARTNERSHIPS/CURRENT ACTIVITIES

COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS

A number of relationships have been formed through the various programming, event and training initiatives undertaken by Goldfields Libraries with representative individuals and organisations from Dja Dja Wurrung, Taungurung and Wurundjeri countries.

DJAARA (Dja Dja Wurrung Clans Aboriginal Corporation)

Goldfields Libraries has consulted regularly with DJAARA staff, including on:

- Wording of Acknowledgement of Country.
- Procuring First Nations Art.
- The development of projects (eg: Bendigo Library Aquarium, Children's area artwork and Creekside Story walks).
- Engagement with the local Aboriginal community; Booking of speakers, programs, Welcome to Country and Smoking Ceremonies.
- Professional development pertaining to respectful community engagement.

Nalderun Education Aboriginal Corporation

Castlemaine Library has a good relationship with Nalderun Education Aboriginal Corporation and has undertaken children's storybook project with them, and cultural awareness training at various intervals.

Wartatjarrang Local Aboriginal Network (LAN)

Goldfields Libraries was invited to be part of the relatively new Bendigo-based (regional) LAN in early 2022. The group meets approximately every two months and includes First Nations and non-Aboriginal organisational representatives. It is facilitated by Nicola Perry, Aboriginal Community Development Broker with the Department of Premier and Cabinet. Nicola also facilitates other brokerage across almost our whole region (with the exception of Mount Alexander Shire).

Anti-racism Allies Network

Convened by Aunty Steff Armstrong, this group meet with the following aims:

- To build our understanding of what it means to be anti-racist and an ally to First Nations people.
- To explore how we can work together to resource and plan actions that are clearly directed at addressing racism.
- To explore actions that support and build allyship with First Nations people.

Along with a number of major employers in the area, Goldfields Libraries was invited to participate in this network and contribute to achieve the above outcomes.

Bendigo & District Aboriginal Co-operative (BDAC)

The relationship with BDAC has centred around the collaboration on programming with a particular focus on early years and special events. There are long-standing arrangements for regular programs that have allowed for the addition of various opportunities to deliver unique or one-off events.

Simon Briggs KESO, DET (formerly Penrose)

Simon completed the Bendigo Library audit and has continued to share his time generously, when able, in supporting the library's journey of reconciliation.

Aunty Kerri Douglas, also KESO, DET.

Traditional Owner and on the Board of DJAARA. Kerri is a great supporter of libraries and early years literacy and has been engaged to deliver professional development sessions and provide letters of support for projects undertaken by Goldfields Libraries.

INTERNAL ACTIVITIES/INITIATIVES

A number of activities and initiatives have been undertaken over the past five years in particular, guiding the organisation towards cultural reconciliation. Please find the following outline of work completed, including actions against the cultural audit, acknowledgement of country references, visual representation of culture and diversification of our collection.

Cultural Audit

In 2018, local Aboriginal community member Simon Briggs (formerly Penrose) undertook an audit of the Goldfields Libraries website and Bendigo Library (the largest library in the Goldfields Libraries network), and made a series of recommendations. Many of these recommendations have now been actioned, as shown below. Remaining actions may appear in Branch Plans, Functional Area Plans and Work Plans (see Appendix 1). A handful of the recommendations may not yet be viable due to resource/complexity/whole of sector limitations (see comments). Some are ongoing actions which have been supported organisationally by the high priority given to these in the 2021-25 Library Plan. The Reconciliation Action Plan should cross reference these recommendations, alongside affiliated Council Reconciliation Action Plans.

Commitment to inclusion (included in strategic planning documents)

Goldfields Libraries condemns racism and stands in solidarity with the international community in condemning violence and racism against people of colour. We acknowledge Australia's history of violence against its First Nations people, who have experienced, and continue to experience, systemic discrimination and disadvantage.

Goldfields Library Corporation is actively working to build cultural literacy in our own staff and organisation. We seek to eradicate racism by developing library services that are equitable, culturally aware, and build cultural literacy and a deeper understanding of Australian History for all who live in our region and beyond. We as an organisation are continuing to learn and grow.

Goldfields Library Corporation acknowledges the Traditional Owners and Custodians of the land and waterways of our region. We recognise their living cultures and ongoing connection to Country, and pay respect to their Elders past and present.

Acknowledgement at footer of Goldfields Libraries website

Goldfields Library Corporation acknowledges the Traditional Owners and Custodians of the land and waterways of our region. We recognise their living cultures and ongoing connection to Country, and pay respect to their Elders past, present and emerging.

Acknowledgement at footer of staff e-mail signature

Goldfields Library Corporation acknowledges the Traditional Owners and Custodians of the land and waterways of our region. We recognise their living cultures and ongoing connection to Country, and pay respect to their Elders past and present.

Acknowledgement of Country

Goldfields Libraries acknowledge the Dja Dja Wurrung Peoples as the Traditional Owners and Custodians of the land and waterways of this region. We recognise their living cultures and ongoing connection to Country, and pay our respects to Elders past, present and emerging.





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.	January 2024	Lead: Manager Engagement and Operations Support: Bendigo Library Managers Kyneton & Heathcote Library Officers Coordinator Community Based Services
	Research best practice and principles that support partnerships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and organisations.	January 2024	Manager Engagement and Operations
2. Build relationships through celebrating National Reconciliation	Circulate Reconciliation Australia's NRW resources and reconciliation materials to our staff.	May 2024	Manager Engagement and Operations Coordinator Communications
Week (NRW).	RAP Working Group members to participate in an external NRW event.	27 May -3 June 2024	Lead: Manager Engagement and Operations Support: Bendigo Library Managers Kyneton, Castlemaine & Heathcote Library Officers Coordinator Community Based Services
	Encourage and support staff and senior leaders to participate in at least one external event to recognise and celebrate NRW.	27 May -3 June 2024	Manager Engagement and Operations

Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
3. Promote reconciliation through our sphere of influence.	Communicate our commitment to reconciliation to all staff.	January 2024 April 2024 July 2024 October 2024 January 2025	Manager Engagement and Operations Coordinator Communications
	Identify external stakeholders that our organisation can engage with on our reconciliation journey.	January 2024	Lead: Manager Engagement and Operations Support: Bendigo Library Managers Kyneton & Heathcote Library Officers Coordinator Community Based Services
	Identify RAP and other like- minded organisations that we could approach to collaborate with on our reconciliation journey.	January 2024	Lead: Manager Engagement and Operations Support: Bendigo Library Managers Kyneton & Heathcote Library Officers Coordinator Community Based Services
4. Promote positive race relations through anti- discrimination	Research best practice and policies in areas of race relations and anti- discrimination.	February 2024	Manager Engagement and Operations Human Resources Administrator
strategies.	Conduct a review of HR policies and procedures to identify existing anti- discrimination provisions, and future needs.	January 2024	Human Resources Administrator
	Deliver racism bystander training to those staff yet to be trained in this area.	July 2024	Human Resources Advisor Human Resources Administrator Human Services Officer
	Reinforce zero tolerance of racism, through updated incident reporting forms and patron code of conduct.	July 2024	Manager Engagement and Operations



Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
5. Increase understanding, value and recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, histories,	Develop a business case increasing understanding, value and recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, histories, knowledge and rights within our organisation.	February 2024	Lead: Manager Engagement and Operations Support: Human Resources Advisor Human Resources Officer
knowledge and rights through cultural learning.	Conduct a review of cultural learning needs within our organisation.	March 2024	Lead: Manager Engagement and Operations Support: Human Resources Advisor Human Resources Officer
6. Demonstrate respect to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples by	Develop an understanding of the local Traditional Owners or Custodians of the lands and waters within our organisation's operational area.	January 2024	Manager Engagement and Operations
observing cultural protocols.	Increase staff's understanding of the purpose and significance behind cultural protocols, including Acknowledgement of Country and Welcome to Country protocols.	January 2024	Manager Engagement and Operations
7. Build respect for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and histories	Raise awareness and share information amongst our staff about the meaning of NAIDOC Week.	June 2024	Coordinator Communications Manager Engagement and Operations
by celebrating NAIDOC Week.	Introduce our staff to NAIDOC Week by promoting external events in our local area.	June 2024	Coordinator Communications Manager Engagement and Operations
	RAP Working Group to participate in an external NAIDOC Week event.	First week in July 2024	Lead: Manager Engagement Operations Support: Bendigo Library Managers Kyneton, Castlemaine & Heathcote Library Officers Coordinator Community Based Services



Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
8. Improve employment outcomes by increasing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander recruitment,	Develop a business case for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment within our organisation.	June 2024	Lead: Manager Engagement and Operations Support: Human Resources Advisor Human Resources Officer
retention and professional development.	ion and sional Build understanding of current June 2024	June 2024	Manager Engagement and Operations Human Resources Advisor
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.	February 2024	Manager Engagement and Operations Human Resources Advisor
	Investigate Supply Nation membership.	January 2024	Manager Engagement and Operations



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Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
10. Establish and maintain an effective RAP Working Group	Maintain a RWG to govern RAP implementation.	December 2024	Manager Engagement and Operations
(RWG) to drive governance of RAP.	Review and Update a Terms of Reference for the RWG.	December 2024	Manager Engagement and Operations
	Establish Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander representation on the RWG.	September 2024	Lead: Manager Engagement and Operations Support: Bendigo Library Managers Kyneton, Castlemaine & Heathcote Library Officers Coordinator Community Based Services
11. Provide appropriate support for effective	Define resource needs for RAP implementation.	December 2023	Manager Engagement and Operations
implementation of RAP commitments.	Engage senior leaders in the delivery of RAP commitments.	December 2023	Manager Engagement and Operations
	Appoint a senior leader to champion our RAP internally.	December 2023	Manager Engagement and Operations
	Define appropriate systems and capability to track, measure and report on RAP commitments.	December 2023	Manager Engagement and Operations Select RWG Members

Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
12. Build accountability and transparency through reporting RAP achievements,	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.	June 2024 annually	Manager Engagement and Operations
challenges and learnings both internally and externally.	Contact Reconciliation Australia to request our unique link, to access the online RAP Impact Survey.	1 August 2024 annually	Manager Engagement and Operations
	Complete and submit the annual RAP Impact Survey to Reconciliation Australia.	30 September 2024 annually	Manager Engagement and Operations
13. Continue our reconciliation journey by developing our next RAP.	Register via Reconciliation Australia's website to begin developing our next RAP.	January 2025 (18month RAP)	Manager Engagement and Operations

Contact details:

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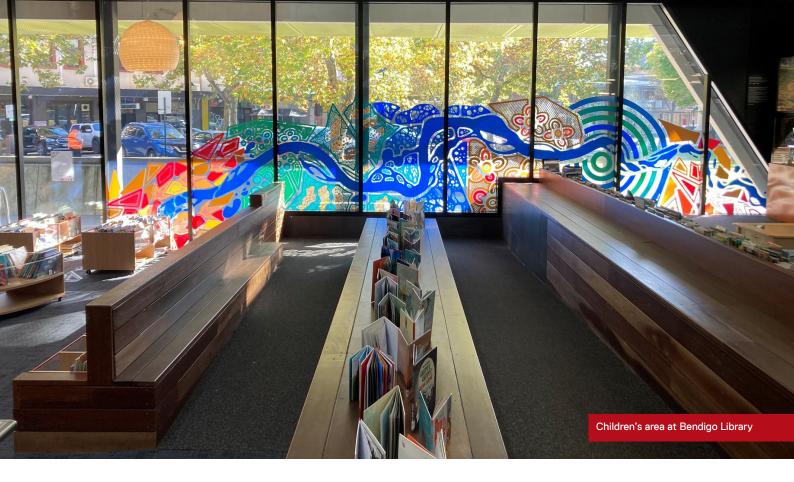


APPENDIX 1:

Cultural Audit conducted by Simon Briggs (formerly Penrose)

Recommendation	Action
Commitment to inclusion: The Library will explore and create a commitment which captures the Goldfields Library intent for Cultural inclusion.	Acknowledgement of Country policy developed and implemented. Incorporation of this commitment as a key priority in the Library Plan 2021-25. This commitment in now reflected in all branch plans, Functional Area Plans and relevant associated workplans. This commitment is also expressed in the 'Supporting First Nations' page on the library website.
Communications: Inclusion of an Acknowledgement to be added to the front page of the Goldfields Libraries website.	An Acknowledgment of Country Policy was developed and implemented, including AoC on some marketing materials, communications including the Goldfields Libraries website and staff e-mails.
Collections: Include a quick link underneath either What's New or Quick Links tabs to allow for anyone click on and be taken directly to all resources/books/etc related to Aboriginal and Torres Strait islander cultures. Inclusion of warnings should be added to this page – examples of wording listed below: (Taken from State Library New South Wales) Special care notice Visitors should be aware that this material may contain images or documentation relating to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people who are deceased. Visitors are warned that there may be words and descriptions which may be considered sensitive and/or offensive in today's contexts.	 A new First Nations page was developed with a quick link from the front page of the Goldfields Libraries website. It includes the following: Statement of Support Information about our Reconciliation Week celebrations Information about our NAIDOC week celebrations Local First Nations information Further Resources & Information A statement condemning violence against First Nations peoples Recommended reading and links to library catalogue (including eBooks, audio books, documentaries and film).
 Purchasing books/resources: Document process for purchasing resources and which services/ businesses or individuals when purchasing Aboriginal and Torres Strait authored books and themed books/resources. Review how Aboriginal stories/books and resources are categorised. Are they Fiction or Non-Fiction? Explore ongoing commitment to purchase local Aboriginal designed/authored, etc books and resources on a yearly basis. Label each book of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander origin/ themed, etc with an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander flag sticker on the binder. 	Changing subject headings in cataloguing records would have to be reflected by our vendors and other libraries (if they search 'Dreamtime' as a subject heading and we've changed it to 'Religion-Dreaming' there could be confusion) so that's a bigger project with training and awareness from staff regarding cataloguing specifications. New Readers' Advisory Software being used that creates templates for Collections promotion, both in paper and web, and it will have culturally relevant events already templated for display. It will be easier for staff to create promotional material for our collections surrounding Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander items.

Recommendation	Action
 Family History: Include a tab underneath Family History for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Family History. Inclusion of warnings should be added to this page – examples of wording above. Information of relevant resources/ services available at the library to help assist family history research. Include the training staff have undertaken to support Family History for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. Include any services like the Bendigo and District Aboriginal Co-op, Koorie Heritage Trust, Link-Up Vic that can assist Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people's research and connect with family. 	The library hosts periodic in person and online workshops on how and where to research Victorian Aboriginal Family History. There is a support booklet in the Bendigo Regional Archives Service and staff trained to support. Two Bendigo staff are meeting with BDAC Elder Auntie Iris weekly, assisting her with genealogy research as part of the Bringing them home project. This is possibly a 6-12 month project. We had started the connections pre-covid.
 Visual culture: Limited visual Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture on display. Recommendations are as follows: Representation outside/at entrances Visual culture inside libraries Naming of meetings rooms in language Language group maps of Australia Further recommendations: Utilise the NSW State Library Key Dates document to create a calendar for the whole year, to rotate displays throughout the library which now include Aboriginal cultural items/ resource/ history and cultures in a positive manner and reflect and relevant to the key dates. The Family History Room should incorporate a framed and mounted Apology to the Stolen Generations letter on the wall. It is recommended that a local Aboriginal art piece be purchased and hung within the Family History Room. Notice board with a focus on local Aboriginal services and businesses. 	 A rotation of display and booking system for loan by local Aboriginal community of 3 Local Possum Skin Cloaks held in custodianship by Goldfields Libraries. Acknowledgement plaques at all libraries. Successful applications for funding for the procurement and development of original artworks by local First Nations artists. Outputs include: Murals at Kangaroo Flat Library (front desk) by local Dja Dja Wurrung Artist, Daikota Nelson) Bendigo Library window Children's area by local Yorta Yorta and DJAARA artist, Troy Firebrace (visible both inside and outside) Castlemaine Library's new meeting room was named in language, in consultation with local First Nations Elders and DJAARA Corporation. Named Tammia long, meaning Quiet in Jaara language. Language group maps of Australia purchased for each library. Curated collections displays have been created to go with the Possum Cloaks – a schedule of these to travel across the region.



Recommendation	Action
 Children's spaces inclusions: Aboriginal Artefacts Aboriginal Art (at children's eye level) Aboriginal children's books Floor mats/cushions/reading nooks with Aboriginal art and symbolism Footprints of native animals which are significant to the traditional owners Meet with Aboriginal children and ask what they would like to see to make them feel welcome and celebrated in these spaces (in consultation with BDAC). 	These recommendations are being implemented gradually across all libraries, as budget allows. The Bendigo Library children's area upgrades have seen some very special additions including an aquarium featuring flora and fauna from local creeks and waterways, and a large Aboriginal Art mural by local artist Troy Firebrace.
 Employment Utilise the Indigenous spaces library places document from the NSW State library for strategies to address employment opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. Develop relationships with Aboriginal community organisations, businesses and community groups and explore opportunities to advertise and notify community members of employment opportunities. Develop work experience/volunteering opportunities for local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people of the community. 	Not yet actioned.

Recommendation	Action
 Professional Development Library policy requiring all staff to undergo Cultural Awareness training as part of their induction process within the first 3 to 6 months of commencing the new role & for all ongoing staff to complete training every 2 years. Support all staff including Leadership to participate in Cultural Self-reflection. 	Training opportunities offered periodically to staff at different branches depending on local relationships and opportunities.
 Community Engagement The library should continue to be engaged in attending and participating in the NAIDOC Children's Day held each year. Continue to build on the seasonal calendar of events/activities and ensure Aboriginal people are consulted and included to provide activities and events for each season. Explore the process to include Aboriginal seasonal names within or on the seasonal calendar of events. Develop a greater understanding of Aboriginal significant dates and create events and activities alongside and with Aboriginal community when 	 Programs, activities and relationship building are an ongoing priority for our staff at all levels. Examples of recent programs include: Thomas Mayor on Uluru Statement from the Heart (as part of Bendigo Writer's Festival) Traditional Weaving workshops, special Storytimes Australian Indigenous Astronomy with Kirsten Banks – our most popular online program ever (youtube.com/goldfieldslibraries) Discovering History: The Forgotten People (youtube.com/goldfieldslibraries) Author talks: Lynne Kelly & Margo Neale, Songlines



First Nations





Goldfields Library Corporation

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