



St Kilda Elsternwick Baptist Church

Reconciliation Action Plan for January 2015 - December 2016



INNOVATE RAP

St Kilda Elsternwick Baptist Church

Reconciliation Action Plan for January 2015 - December 2016

Acknowledgement of Country

St Kilda Elsternwick Baptist Church acknowledges the Yalukit Willam clan of the Boon Wurrung as the Traditional Custodians of the land on which we meet. We pay our respects to their Elders, both past and present, and recognize how precious, rich and diverse is the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture of this country to which we belong.

Our vision for reconciliation

Our Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) reflects our commitment to expressing our respect for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and culture in the various aspects of our church life.

We will do this by:

- Paying attention to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture and issues in our worship, our education and when we pray;
- Developing relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people both locally and across Australia; and
- Working in partnership with others in local, statewide and national spheres to ensure that all marginalized groups, but especially Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians, are able to share, on an equitable basis, the resources that provide basic human rights - such as food, shelter, material goods, education, health and wellbeing and access to information.

Our Church

Our Church has been active in the St Kilda Elsternwick area for over 100 years. Throughout that time the Church has tried to bear witness to the life and teachings of Jesus in the local community and beyond. Historically, the Baptists have stood for freedom of religion and civil rights, and in the 1960s the witness of Rev Martin Luther King inspired many Baptists here in Australia as well.

Although our congregation does not presently include any Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, it does include approximately 80 regular attenders, three part-time staff, and nine members of the RAP Working Group (RAPWG).

Our RAP

St Kilda Elsternwick Baptist Church has a significant history of involvement with, and support for, Aboriginal communities during the 1980s, 90s and beyond. Several families have deliberately moved from their homes in Melbourne in order to offer their skills to Aboriginal communities.

These families include the Parslow, Holmes and Willis families, all of whom lived and worked in remote Northern Territory Aboriginal communities.

St Kilda Elsternwick Baptist Church also had the privilege of hosting Grant Paulson's family and supporting Grant throughout his theological studies. Grant is one of the few Aboriginal Baptist candidates to undertake studies of this kind, and his father, rev Graham Paulson, was the first Aboriginal person to be ordained as a Minister in the Baptist Church. Graham Paulson was also a pastor among the Walpiri and Gurindji people in the 1970s, and a supporter of Vincent Lingari, a member of his church after the Wave Hill Walk Off. During their time with us, the Paulsons raised our awareness of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural issues.

The Church first began to work on its RAP in 2010. In April 2012 a new RAPWG was appointed, and it has met monthly. To help frame the RAP we used resources from Reconciliation Australia, Tear Australia, as well as port Phillip City Council.

As at January 2015, the members of the RAP Working Group are: Alan Marr, Brianna Norman, Digby Hannah, Helen Hoffman, Iris l'Anson, Ian Lovell, Judi Kenneally, Rod Wise and Anita Brown.

The first RAP was launched in December 2013 and implemented in 2014.

Relationships	<p>The development of good relationships and the healing of broken relationships are central to Christian faith. In the words of the Apostle Paul, “God has entrusted to us the ministry of reconciliation.”</p> <p>As we consider the history of our country we are conscious of the shameful way in which Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander people were dispossessed of their land and treated with arrogance and disrespect. Church leaders and missionaries, whilst often standing against cruelty and violence, were often complicit with this dispossession and disrespect.</p> <p>We are keen to do whatever we can to make amends, to participate in the process of reconciliation and to make our community an open and welcoming one to our Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander brothers and sisters.</p>
----------------------	---

Action	Responsibility	Timeline	Measurable targets
The RAP Working Group (RAPWG) continues to actively monitor RAP development, including implementation of actions, tracking progress and reporting.	Members of the RAPWG	Review December annually	<p>Maintain a RAPWG of 6 - 8 members</p> <p>The RAPWG will seek membership of, or advice from, Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander peoples through exploration of Indigenous Ministries in Melbourne.</p> <p>Inform the Church about the need for members to join the RAPWG (and inspire them to want to).</p> <p>Quarterly meetings of the RAPWG to review implementation of the RAP to include evidence of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Regular contact with stakeholders ▪ Information about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander events communicated to congregation ▪ Regular Acknowledgment of Traditional Owners ▪ Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander issues reflected in prayers ▪ Commitment to funding of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander project <p>RAPWG oversees the development, endorsement and launch of the RAP.</p>
St Kilda Elsternwick Baptist Church will build and maintain relationships with Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander stakeholders in the local area.	Members of the RAPWG	Report September annually	<p>Visits by members of the St Kilda/ Elsternwick Baptist Church to the Melbourne Indigenous Fellowship Church</p> <p>Six-monthly contact with the City of Port Phillip’s Indigenous Policy Officer - in order to offer assistance (e.g. use of premises) and support.</p> <p>Contact, support, and where possible, attendance at meetings of the Port Phillip Citizens for Reconciliation.</p> <p>Attendance, where possible, at the fortnightly lunch gathering at Inner South Community Health Centre and the weekly luncheon for the local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people at the Peanut Farm in St Kilda.</p>

Contact established and maintained with the Winja Ulupna Women's Recovery Centre.

Relationships	<p>The development of good relationships and the healing of broken relationships are central to Christian faith. In the words of the Apostle Paul, "God has entrusted to us the ministry of reconciliation."</p> <p>As we consider the history of our country we are conscious of the shameful way in which Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander people were dispossessed of their land and treated with arrogance and disrespect. Church leaders and missionaries, whilst often standing against cruelty and violence, were often complicit with this dispossession and disrespect.</p> <p>We are keen to do whatever we can to make amends, to participate in the process of reconciliation and to make our community an open and welcoming one to our Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander brothers and sisters.</p>
----------------------	---

Action	Responsibility	Timeline	Measurable target
Celebrate National Reconciliation Week (NRW) by providing opportunities for members of the congregation to build relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.	RAPWG	27 May - 3 June, annually	Participation in events organised by council. Where practicable, organisation of at least one internal event each year.
Raise awareness of St Kilda Elsternwick Baptist Church RAP and the RAP Program	RAPWG	December 2016	Other faith communities supported and encouraged to develop their own RAPs. Participation in a forum on the development of RAPs for faith communities. St Kilda Elsternwick Baptist Church to make the RAP available to Christian Church communities and other faith communities. St Kilda Elsternwick Baptist Church's RAP to be made available on both Reconciliation Australia's website and the Church's website and Facebook page.

Action	Responsibility	Timeline	Measurable target
Maintain awareness across the St Kilda Elsternwick Baptist Church community about the RAP. Encourage all groups in the Church to identify how they can contribute to the meeting of measurable targets set out in the plan.	Pastors	October 2015	Reflections on Bible perspectives on land, inclusion and other relevant issues through use of Bible readings and questions.
		Report October annually	Invite an Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander person to speak at a church service at least once a year.

	Members of the RAPWG	Report October annually	Acquisition of sufficient knowledge of the traditional landowners of the area and their history to be able to bring stories back to the church community.
--	----------------------	-------------------------	---

Respect	We seek to show respect to all people, of whatever colour, race, religion or socio-economic background, as people loved by, and made in the image of, God. In particular, we are mindful of the lack of respect which Christian missionaries and church leaders in the past have shown towards the original Australians, and we seek to rectify this in any way possible. As a first step, we are keen to listen to our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander brothers and sisters, to pay our respects to their ancient and precious culture, to hear their stories and to understand their viewpoints.
----------------	--

Action	Responsibility	Timeline	Measurable target
Engage members of congregation in understanding the protocols around Acknowledgement of Country and Welcome to Country ceremonies to ensure there is shared meaning behind the ceremonies.	Worship leaders RAPWG	Report July annually	Inclusion of Acknowledgment of Country regularly in church worship service and important meetings. Acknowledgment of Country to contain, from time to time, stories, elaborations, and historical or current illustrations to enhance understanding and avoid words becoming simply ritualistic. Identify at least one significant event for which a Welcome to Country from a Traditional Owner will be included.
Encourage members of the congregation in cultural learning to increase understanding and appreciation of different cultural backgrounds in order to lay the foundation for other RAP actions to be achieved.	RAPWG	January 2016	Cultural awareness training opportunities identified for St Kilda Elsternwick Baptist Church members. In particular, RAP Champions and others in key leadership roles encouraged to participate in training (e.g. in the church, council, workplace). Participation by church members in a cultural awareness workshop run by the council.
Encourage and provide opportunities for the congregation to participate in local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander events and initiatives, including the National Sorry Day and NAIDOC Week.	RAPWG	Report January, annually	Congregation informed through the Church's weekly newsletter of activities and events (including the National Sorry Day and NAIDOC Week) and news gathered from Port Phillip Council Citizens for Reconciliation group. Participation by members of the congregation in a Port Phillip Indigenous Heritage walk (e.g. Yallukit Willam trail).
Maintain / update the Church's communication channels (including the Aroma / weekly newsletter and website) to reflect our commitment to Reconciliation.	Administrative officer	July 2015	Inclusion of Acknowledgment of Traditional Custodians / Owners of the land in the Church's print and web material.

Opportunity	We acknowledge that many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities continue to suffer because of the past and that this suffering is compounded by disadvantage (including lower life expectancy, lower levels of education, higher unemployment levels and poorer health than the broader Australian community). As people of faith who are called to do justice, we desire to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people who are working for healing and justice within their communities.
--------------------	--

Action	Responsibility	Timeline	Measurable target
Continue to provide financial support for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander programs.	Chair of the Deacons	March 2015	Maintenance of a dedicated line in the budget for supporting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander programs.
	RAPWG member	October 2015	Maintenance of our financial support of the Melbourne Indigenous Church Fellowship in Footscray.
Provide opportunities, where appropriate, for the use of church premises for local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander programs.	RAPWG member	Report August, annually	Possibilities continued to be discussed with Port Phillip Council Indigenous Officer and local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander networks.
		October 2015	Annual exhibition of artworks of Galiamble residents. (Invitation to be extended to Winja Ulupna residents also in 2015).
Investigate opportunities to increase supplier diversity within St Kilda Elsternwick Baptist Church	Pastors, deacons and administrators	Report August, annually	Victorian Indigenous Business Directory consulted when buying goods and services.
			When purchasing goods and services, consideration given to prioritising businesses listed in the Victorian Indigenous Business Directory: http://directory.business.vic.gov.au/indigenous# .
			Relationship created with a local Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander business.
Promote to members of the congregation the desirability of increasing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment opportunities in their workplaces.	RAPWG	December 2016	Investigation of different approaches to increasing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment within workplaces (this may include training pathways, apprenticeships, internships, cadetships, work experience) identified in congregational discussions with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.
			Communication with internal and external community regarding employment opportunities.
			Investigation of different approaches to increasing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples volunteering with St Kilda Elsternwick Baptist Church.

		Connection with organisations to seek employment possibilities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander members of the congregation and community.
--	--	---

Tracking progress and reporting

Refresh / update RAP annually in response to deepening understanding and appreciation of new opportunities.	Chair of RAPWG	October 2015	An annual meeting of the RAPWG to review the RAP and update / refresh the actions and targets, as appropriate.
Inform and demonstrate accountability to Deacons.	Chair of RAPWG	Report December, annually	Submission of a quarterly written report to Deacons on RAP activity within the church.
Report on RAP annually (to both the Church and to Reconciliation Australia).	Chair of RAPWG	August / Sept for Church AGM, annually	Verbal report presented to the AGM on RAP activity.
		Report September, annually	Report annually to Reconciliation Australia through the Impact Measurement Questionnaire.

Contact details:

St Kilda Elsternwick Baptist Church, 9 Pakington Street, St Kilda Vic 3182

☎ 61 3 9525 4620

E: skbaptistchurch@hotmail.com

RAP Chair: Helen Hoffman - helenmhoffman@gmail.com