

St Mary's Primary School, Rushworth Reconciliation Covenant *(Established 2011; Reviewed - 2022)*

Covenant

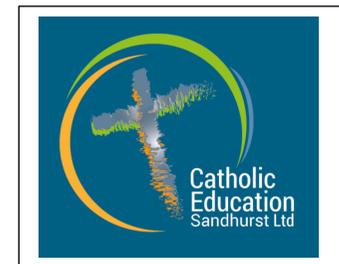
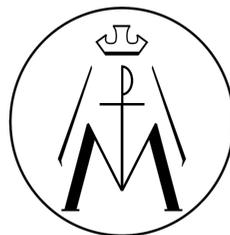
We recognize the special place and culture of Aboriginal people within Australia. We acknowledge that Aboriginal peoples have been the caretakers of this Land for more than 60,000 years. We respect their spiritual connection to Mother Earth through the Dreaming.

'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 Dobson, 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.

Our School

St Mary's Primary School, Rushworth is committed to Reconciliation and sees it as the process of bridging the gap that has developed between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders and non Indigenous Australians due to the events of history. Reconciliation is a way of developing lines of communication recognizing the integrity and dignity of all parties so that both cultures can walk together in friendship. We recognize, as Oodgeroo Noonuccal said, that our liberation is entwined.



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We hope to develop a relationship marked by equality, empathy and an understanding of culture and difference. We want the Reconciliation we are involved in to be a process of healing, a process of putting right.

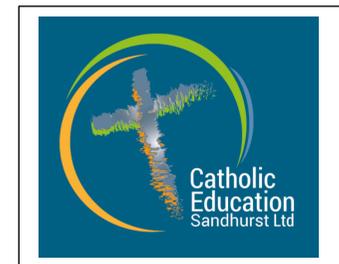
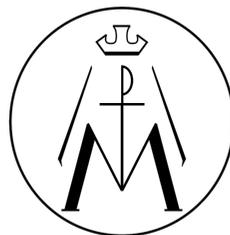
Our Covenant

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

FIRE Carrier Project

The FIRE Carrier Project is an initiative of the Aboriginal Catholic Ministry and the Opening the Doors Foundation with CES Sandhurst 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.



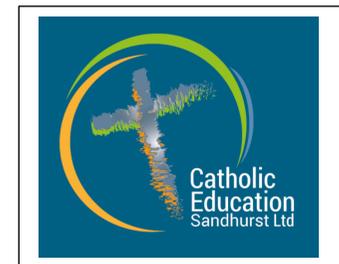
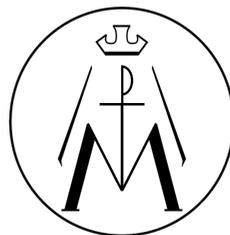
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OUR TARGETS FOR 2022 ARE:

Spirituality

Focus Area: Learn, Teach, Share, Grow towards understanding Aboriginal Spirituality (Holistic)

Action	Responsibility	Timeline	Activities
Through Prayer and knowledge gain/engage a deeper awareness of justice issues.	All Staff	ongoing	Continue to incorporate Aboriginal prayers and symbols in liturgy by using the message stick during reading of the Word and school masses.
	All Staff	ongoing	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.
	All Staff	May/June	Discuss and implement a strategy that will educate the community and reflect on the massacres of Aboriginal people at 68 sites around Victoria.
Explore the significance of spirituality in Aboriginal art.	Thea/Lou	June	Use the expertise of Michael Chisholm and Troy Firebrace- CES Ed Officers.
Create an Australian identity during time of Lent/Advent.	Thea	March/Nov	Perform 'Turning of the Coolamon Ceremony' using the Coolamon Liturgy in a staff liturgy for Lent/Advent.
	Helen	June	Investigate possible resources to purchase for use in the Religious Education Program, to break open the Indigenous perspectives.
	Helen	September	Investigate local Indigenous sites as possible excursion locations for all students.



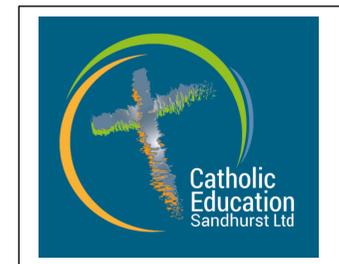
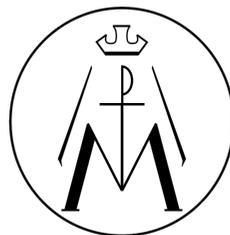
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OUR FUTURE TARGETS ARE:

Cultural Recognition & Awareness

Focus Area: Recognise Cultural Perspectives, Demonstrate Awareness

Action	Responsibility	Timeline	Activities
Embrace Aboriginal stories and culture within school ceremonies.	Students	Ongoing	Continue to Acknowledge Country at School Assemblies.
	Helen	2022	Elders to welcome visitors to Country at significant events (e.g. Opening School Mass.
	All Teachers	ongoing	Maintain Aboriginal perspectives in curriculum.
Publicly display our schools respect for Aboriginal people.	Cate	ongoing	Acknowledge Country on School website and school's printed material such as St Mary's Staff Handbook St Mary's Information Booklet and St Mary's Annual Report.
	Thea and Helen	2022	Organise a cultural event that will be linked to the "Closing the Gap" Campaign for the school community.
	Bianca, Helen, Thea, Grade 5/6's	ongoing	Annual election of student and staff FIRE Carriers and be involved with the CES Sandhurst ceremonies.
	Cate	ongoing	Exhibit Fire Carrier Flame in display cabinet in front foyer.
	Cate		Exhibit Aboriginal crosses in prominent positions around school
Seek advice from ACM on cultural wisdom and seek knowledge of the local Aboriginal community.	All Teachers	2022	Continue to educate the school community of the Aboriginal story of the Ngurai-illum Wurrung /Taungaurang people and land on which the school is situated.
	Helen	2022	Develop Indigenous Perspective resources.
	All Teachers	ongoing	Display Aboriginal posters in classrooms or corridors. Maintain and update the Reconciliation Board.
	All Staff	2022	Engage with local Aboriginal groups and organisations.
	Helen/Thea	ongoing	Celebrate National Apology Day.
	Helen/Thea	ongoing	Commemoration of National Government Apology.



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Practical Recognition & Justice

Focus Area: Walk the Journey together, Put Learning's into Practice

Action	Responsibility	Timeline	Activities
Take Practical Measures toward reconciliation and Justice	Grade 5/6's	ongoing	Continue to fly, display and maintain the Aboriginal Flag.
	Thea	ongoing	Display Aboriginal crosses in junior corridor, staff room and Administration office.
	Helen/Bianca	ongoing	Continue to display and maintain Acknowledgement of Country displays.
	Cate	2022?	Embrace, connect with and listen to local Aboriginal Elders by inviting in a guest speaker from the local community.
	Helen	ongoing	Advertise and encourage a strong school presence in community events e.g. Reconciliation Week and NAIDOC Week.