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Reflect Reconciliation Action Plan 2022 - 2023

Impact Report

Prepared by Guide Dogs Victoria Reconciliation Action Plan Working Group
February 2023

Guide Dogs Victoria acknowledges Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as the First peoples and the Traditional Owners and Custodians of the lands and waters on which we live and work. We pay our respects to their Elders, Knowledge Holders and Leaders, past, present and emerging and extend that respect to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

The purpose of this document is to report on the achieved outcomes of the [Guide Dogs Victoria Reflect Reconciliation Action Plan January 2022 - January 2023](#) and **how we are working to better support First Nations people.**



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This report presents some of the highlights of our Reflect Reconciliation Action Plan work including outcomes against the pillars of Relationships, Respect and Opportunities. Four (4) case studies are presented to illustrate and further explain the outcomes that have been achieved and the impact of our work.

This is Guide Dogs Victoria very first Reconciliation Action Plan. We acknowledge the Guide Dogs Victoria Board of Directors for their leadership and support throughout our reconciliation journey. We appreciate the support and advice received from Reconciliation Australia, Bonnie Chew (Aboriginal Community Representative) from Mirriyu Consulting and the Indigenous Eye Health Unit of The University of Melbourne, through Associate Professor Mitchell Anjou AM.

The Guide Dogs Victoria Reconciliation Action Plan Working Group is championed by the interim Chief Executive Officer Iain Edwards with employee representatives from across the organisation. Together with our senior leaders, the working group encourages participation in the reconciliation journey to ensure the greatest impact for the benefit of all internal and external stakeholders.

Guide Dogs Victoria is committed to improving vision outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. We celebrate our outcomes and learnings to date. We will continue to improve our infrastructure and capability within organisational systems and structures to seamlessly transition our organisation to the next phase of advancing our reconciliation journey with an **Innovate Reconciliation Action Plan**.

We wish to share this report on our reconciliation outcomes and learnings with First Nations people, our stakeholders and the wider Reconciliation Australia network.

Some Highlights of our Reconciliation Journey

Relationships

- Established formal and informal mutually beneficial partnerships with nine (9) Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations and businesses. **Go to Case Study 1 for a list of organisations and businesses that Guide Dogs Victoria worked with through the implementation of the Reflect Reconciliation Action Plan.**
- Strengthened relationships with a number of key Victorian Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations.
- Published and promoted our reconciliation commitment and activities on the Guide Dogs Victoria website and social media platforms with significant engagement outcomes.

Respect

- Wrote and / or improved nine (9) policies with focus on cultural safety. **Go to Case Study 2 to view a list of new and improved policies.**

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- Entered into an agreement with Your Mob Learning for the supply of a online Indigenous Cultural Awareness Training Course Bundle. This is hosted on the Guide Dogs Victoria Learning and Management System. **Go to Case Study 3 to read about the outcome of the Guide Dogs Victoria qualitative study on assessing online Indigenous training courses.**
- 77% of all current employees have completed the mandatory Indigenous Cultural Awareness Foundations Course with Your Mob Learning. The target completion rate is 95% and this will be monitored under an Innovate Reconciliation Action Plan.

Opportunities

- Acknowledged and celebrated National Reconciliation Week and NAIDOC Week. **Go to Case Study 4 to learn about our 2022 NAIDOC Week celebrations that focused on accessible walks on Traditional Lands.**
- Participated in learnings and contributed to improvements to the eye health of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders through membership with Aboriginal networks and working groups.
- Wrote and developed an Aboriginal Employment Recruitment, Retention and Development Strategy. A 3% target has been set for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment. This will be implemented under an Innovate Reconciliation Action Plan.
- Established a Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Naming Working Group to lead a study to identify words and phrases significant to Guide Dogs Victoria for translation into the Woi-wurung language for respectful use with the naming of our workplace-built environments (for example: buildings, rooms and garden), events, program and dog litter names. This project is planned for implementation under an Innovate Reconciliation Action Plan.

Case Study 1 - Organisations and businesses that Guide Dogs Victoria worked with through the implementation of the Reflect Reconciliation Action Plan

- Mirriyu Consulting
- Your Mob Learning
- Your Mob Indigenous Consulting
- Wurundjeri Woi-wurung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation
- Victorian Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation
- Koorie Heritage Trust
- Mabu Mabu Indigenous Bar and Kitchen
- Cooee Indigenous Catering
- Clothing the Gaps

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Case Study 2 - New and Improved Policies with focus on cultural safety

New policies

- Cultural and Ceremonial Leave Policy
- Welcome to Country and Acknowledgment of Country Policy
- Disability Inclusion Policy
- Public Holiday Substitution Policy

Improved Policies

- Employee Assistance Program Policy
- Mental Health and Wellbeing Policy
- Workplace Adjustment and Job Access Policy
- Translation of Client Information Policy
- Prevention of Bullying, Discrimination and Harassment Policy

Case Study 3 - Qualitative study on the relevance and accessibility of online Indigenous training courses for employees

Guide Dogs Victoria aims for a highly skilled and culturally competent workforce that can deliver services and supports that are considered culturally safe for First Nations Clients.

As part of its commitment to reconciliation, Guide Dogs Victoria conducted a systematic review of available Aboriginal owned training organisations and their online learning platforms, face-to-face courses, products and costs. 'Your Mob Learning' created by Your Mob Indigenous Consulting, was selected for further review, as a possible learning supplier.

During April 2022, six (6) employees from across Guide Dogs Victoria participated in a small qualitative study to review and assess the online learning products of the Your Mob Learning

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Indigenous Cultural Awareness Course Bundle. A newly developed checklist was used to support the employee assessors to collect and document their thoughts and opinions on the learning products. The online courses were assessed against 22 accessibility, relevance and suitability criteria in the checklist. In total, 13 checklists were completed by the employee assessors. Individual interviews and a focus group with the assessors were used to elicit further feedback

This small study concluded that the three (3) Your Mob Learning online courses are relevant and suitable for Guide Dogs Victoria and provide for ongoing learning. It is recommended that all current employees complete the Foundations course and similarly all new employees within 3 months of working at Guide Dogs Victoria. That the Refresher course is mandatory for all employees that have completed the Foundations course and within 12 months of working at Guide Dogs Victoria. The Comprehensive course is recommended as mandatory for all leaders and also employees who work closely with First Nations individuals and communities. Employee assessors also suggested that the courses is made available on the Guide Dogs Victoria learning management system. However, it was noted that some improvements to accessibility features of the courses are required for people with low vision and screen users.



Case Study 4 - 2022 NAIDOC Week celebrations with accessible walks on Traditional Lands

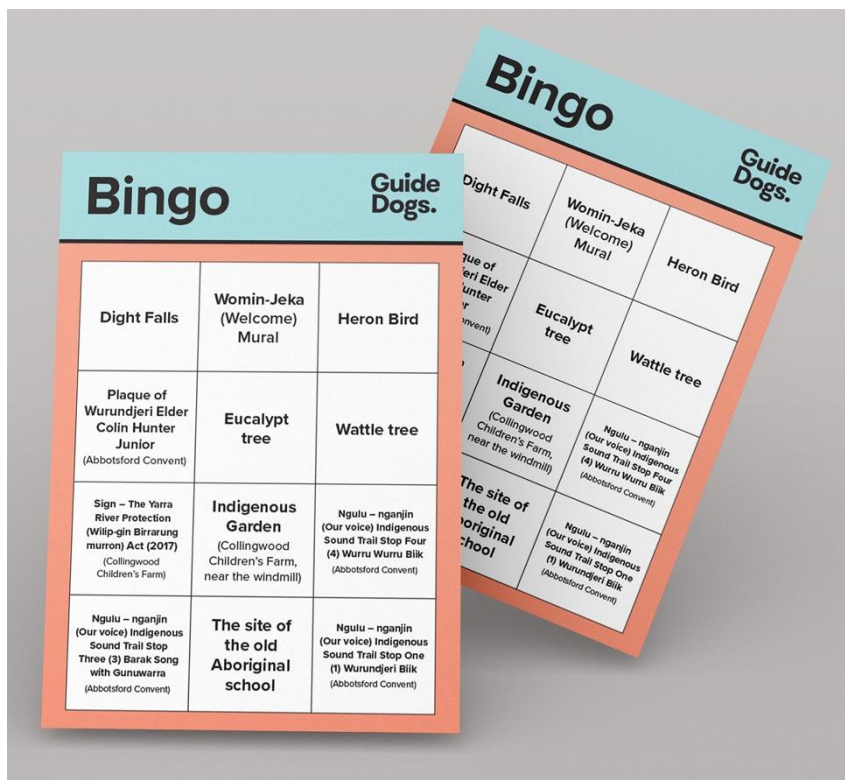
An integral component of the Guide Dogs Victoria Learning and Development Policy is our **Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Employee Awareness Calendar**. The calendar lists significant First Nations days such as National Reconciliation Week and NAIDOC Week.

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During 2022 NAIDOC Week celebrations, employees shared their reflections, learnings and photos from walks taken on Traditional Lands across Victoria.

The Wurundjeri Woi Wurung (City of Yarra) Indigenous Sensory Walk and Bingo Game is a Guide Dogs Victoria developed and designed employee immersive learning and awareness activity implemented during 2022 NAIDOC week. Employees were provided with instructions on the sensory walk including accessibility features along the walk such as disability car parking, access to public transport, disability friendly public toilets, nearby attractions and safety tips. Walkers were encouraged to locate Indigenous items on a bingo card along the walk. The instruction sheet and bingo card were made available to employees and their families in both print and digital format and in printed A4 and A3 size, for accessibility purposes.



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