Reconciliation in action

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Naa Marni,

We are delighted that Uncle Tamaru is now employed with Gowrie SA as Aboriginal Consultant to provide ongoing cultural guidance and learning across our programs. Reconciliation is deeply embedded across our organisation and we are proud to share our learning and actions towards reconciliation these past six months in this newsletter.

The Early Childhood Australia conference was held in Adelaide this year, bringing together early childhood education professionals from across the country and the world. Gowrie SA delivered presentations during this conference, providing an international platform to share our learning and knowledge. Uncle Ivan-Tiwu Copley, Gloria Lalor-Mundine and Mary Scales spoke of 'deep listening' in their presentation titled: Walking together and learning through deep listening. Mary took the opportunity during this presentation to give an Acknowledgement of Country in Kaurna language, which she has been learning with the permission and guidance of Uncle Tamaru. We have been learning Kaurna language as an organisation, and when you call us you'll be greeted with a warm niina marni! We'd love to hear you respond with marni ai (good I am), yuku marni ai (so so good I am) or kuku ai (sick I am).

In the language taught to us by Uncle Tamaru, and with his permission, we say "Kaurna miyurna ngadlu Kaurna yarta tampinthi' to acknowledge the Kaurna people, including past, present and emerging Elders and recognise that Gowrie SA is on unceded Kaurna land.

We are working diligently to develop another Stretch RAP that contains meaningful and sustainable actions that will have a positive impact on reconciliation and ensure our relationships with Elders and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples are respectful, consistent and culturally safe. This new Stretch RAP is currently undergoing review with Reconciliation Australia. We anticipate being able to launch the Stretch RAP in early 2024.

Gowrie South Australia

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Reference Group

We are grateful to the Gowrie SA Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Reference Group for their ongoing cultural advice and guidance, which is invaluable to staff and our programs: Ivan-Tiwu Copley, Karrl Tamaru Smith, Rosemary Wanganeen, Eddie Peters, Nicole Gollan, Rodney Welch and Alex Houthuysen.

We are looking forward to coming together with the Reference Group for our annual end of year lunch.

Staff professional learning

At our whole-organisation professional learning meeting we spent time as a team with Uncle Tamaru to learn Kaurna language.

Staff are beginning to learn greetings in Kaurna language and are speaking Kaurna with each other with Uncle's permission and encouragement.

Uncle is also encouraging staff to write a personal Acknowledgement of Country in Kaurna language that reflects their own learning and reconciliation journey. You may see this next time you receive an email from a Gowrie SA staff member.

As part of our learning, we are also practising correct pronunciation of each word.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children's Day

Children spent time with Uncle Tamaru and our chefs Angel and Brianne to create some delicious icy poles using Quandong and Wild Rosella in celebration of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children's Day.

More information about our reconciliation activities can be found in our Stretch Reconciliation Action Plan 2020-2023, on our website or by following us on social media @GowrieSA

NAIDOC week celebrations

We are fortunate to be able to spend time with Elders who add knowledge and richness to our programs and relationships. Uncle Ivan, Uncle Tamaru and Uncle Eddie each spent time in the Children's Program for our NAIDOC week celebrations earlier this year. Our staff room and kitchen were filled with delicious smells during our Elders cook-up, where we cooked whiting in damper, sweet potatoes and squid with Uncle Ivan.

Children also spent time with Uncle Tamaru learning Kaurna language, and Torres Strait Islander songs with Uncle Eddie.

NAIDOC week is an opportunity to honour our Elders and the essential work they do as custodians of their cultures and ensuring their cultures remain strong into the future.

Lord Mayor's NAIDOC morning tea

Gowrie's Lynne and Mary attended the Lord Mayor's NAIDOC morning tea. This is the sixth year we have joined the morning tea celebration, and it was lovely to be present when Dr Kevin 'Uncle Dookie' O'Loughlin OAM received the Lord Mayor's Achievement Award for 2023.

New firepits in the Children's Program

Uncle Ivan has helped us create a fire pit area at our Thebarton and Underdale sites. During our grand opening of each firepit, we gathered with children and families to watch Uncle Ivan cook on the open flames. Children also helped with the preparation and cooking. These were special occasions to share sweet potato and damper as Uncle Ivan shared his knowledge, culture and expertise with us.

Reconciliation SA Gala

Gowrie SA CEO Lynne and Inclusion Agency and Programs Manager Christina attended the Reconciliation SA Fundraiser Gala as guests of Uncle Tamaru.

It was a wonderful opportunity to support Reconciliation SA's work (and successfully bid on a few silent auctions!) and to meet and mingle with others, including Attorney General Kyam Maher and Karen Briggs, whose beautiful artwork features on the front page of our current and previous Reconciliation Action Plans.

Using cultural tools in our programs

These stunning emu callers, created by Ozzie Egan from the Madi Madi Tribe, are being used in our programs to signal the start of a meeting or group time.

Our purchase of the emu callers was prompted by a conversation with Uncle Tamaru about how they were traditionally used by Aboriginal peoples during hunting to attract the emu away from its nest. By hitting the end of the emu caller with your hand, it makes a thumping sound similar to that of the emu.

Careers in early childhood

Students from the South Australian Aboriginal Training Academy recently spent time in our Children's Program to learn more about a career in early childhood.

In the afternoon they got their hands into the clay. How incredible is the detail in this beauty.

Finding our voice (Warra)

Children in our Wisteria room have been spending time expressing their voice through various forms of art, music and movement and understanding how respectful expression of voice gives more opportunity for their own and others' voices to be heard.

During a visit to the Art Gallery of South Australia the children were led through a range of activities in a workshop and created a beautiful collaborative artwork to represent what Country means to them and why taking care of Country is important.

The educators involved in this inquiry project also shared their learning during a presentation at our recent Annual General Meeting.

Right: AGM presentation; Below: children's collaborative art work