

Reconciliation in action

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Naa Marni, welcome to our first reconciliation newsletter for the year.

National Reconciliation Week holds a special place on the Gowrie calendar, where educators, children, families, and community come together to celebrate and recognise the rich histories, cultures, and perspectives of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. We are grateful to have Uncle Ivan, Uncle Eddie, Uncle Tamaru, and Trent Hill spend time sharing their culture and knowledge during NRW and also throughout the year.

We have created an internal online mobile-friendly reconciliation knowledge hub for staff, managed by one of our cultural practitioners. The hub allows us to share current information about reconciliation and related events and campaigns and resources that support staff learning about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and histories. We hope this will support our reconciliation journey as an organisation as well as the personal reconciliation journeys of individual staff. The hub is also becoming a library of resources our educators can use to strengthen their programs.

We are also excited to announce that we are working on our fourth Stretch Reconciliation Action Plan. The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Reference Group have contributed ideas and continue to provide invaluable advice - we are grateful for their time, extraordinary knowledge and aspirations. This new Reconciliation Action Plan is full of promising projects aimed at driving meaningful change within Gowrie SA, the sector, and the broader community.

Looking back on our 2020-2023 Stretch Reconciliation Action Plan, we are happy to report that we have successfully delivered on our commitments. We remain committed to reconciliation and will continue to work toward creating a better future for all Australians. Please keep reading to learn more about our recent achievements.

Deadly Mob

Our Children's Program is working with Uncle Tamaru from Deadly Mob to establish a bush tucker garden and learn the principles of sustainability. We are beginning with the kindergarten children and then later with infants and toddlers to establish a butterfly garden using plants native to Kurna land.



Uncle is teaching children Kurna language through song, the use of clapping sticks and dance, and the use of Kurna shields. The children have been building a strong connection with Uncle as he shares Kurna culture with us.



During one visit, Uncle showed the children a parndo (ball to play with), which is made from possum fur and filled with coal. The children enjoyed throwing the parndo together. Some of our kindergarten children have also been playing parndo during their visits to Dove Street Reserve.



Uncle also came to show the Thebarton and Underdale children how to cook whole fish in clay. The children eagerly participated in rolling out the clay before the Rainbow Trout was put in with Lemon Myrtle and baked.

The children in every room were involved and very excited to try the fish with Uncle - there was even a queue for second helpings!





Engaging in conversation and music with Uncle Eddie

Staff and children were treated to a musical performance by Uncle Eddie during National Reconciliation Week and engaged in conversation relating to culture and the meaning of reconciliation.

Uncle Eddie also helped us prepare 'Subi Corn' for lunch.

On Mabo Day, we encouraged children to wear their most vibrant coloured or floral shirts to commemorate Eddie Koiki Mabo's contributions to the legal recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander rights to their lands.

The children, families and educators in the Correa room have been exploring how they arrive at Gowrie. They've been mapping out how they arrive using Kurna symbols and their own personal symbols. They considered who lives in their house, the direction they come from to get to Gowrie and what they see on the way. It's been a wonderful opportunity for them to learn and express themselves in a unique and meaningful way that highlights the individuality of each person's experience. It was a fabulous collaborative experience for everyone involved.





Uncle Tamaru's lizard Ferris, pictured with Gowrie SA CEO Lynne, is a welcome visitor to Gowrie SA!



Kaurna language

With Uncle Tamaru's guidance and advice, we are making changes to our Thebarton and Underdale sites to ensure consistency of Kaurna language. We have been strengthening the welcoming of the front reception and entrances and creating a mechanism for staff, children and families to ask questions that Uncle can answer at each of his visits.

Gowrie CEO Lynne and Professional Learning Program Leader and RAP Champion Mary continue to spend some time with Uncle, learning Kaurna language. Uncle is encouraging us all to speak some Kaurna words and greetings, and many staff already know some words through their work with Cultural Practitioner Mel, so this will add to that work. Lynne emailed staff with some of the learning to support the use of Kaurna language in greetings, and on other occasions when talking to each other. Uncle is keen for us to walk before we run so learning the basics will stand us in good stead for future learning. Uncle will be spending time with staff over the coming months to support them with their learning.

Supporting other services

Uncle Ivan-Tiwu Copley and Professional Learning Program Leader Mary Scales have continued to work with Athelstone Primary this year to explore Kaurna cultural and historical connections to 'water is life' inquiry unit.

This project included teacher and student cultural walks with Uncle Ivan and a school closure day exploring yarning circles, the deep listening that is required and protocols for engaging in them.

Our work with the school has also been able to link to their Reconciliation Action Plan and most recently has included collecting artefacts to create a Kaurna talking tub of provocations for the students. It includes short videos of Uncle introducing the artefacts and why they are important to Kaurna people.



Kyam Maher MLC visit to our Children's Program

We had the pleasure of hosting a visit to Gowrie SA by Minister for Aboriginal Affairs and state Attorney-General Kyam Maher MLC and we were joined by Uncle Tamaru from Deadly Mob. During this visit, we showcased the work we are doing learning Kaurna language.





Immersed in culture

Gowrie SA's Mary Scales worked closely with Uncle Eddie Peters and Southern Cultural Immersion over many months in planning and coordinating the Adelaide Fringe event Zenadth Kes Ilan night held at the Living Kurna Cultural Centre. This was a beautiful night under the stars, immersed in culture. Gowrie staff (#TeamEddie) provided amazing support on the night. We hope this is the beginning of a strong partnership with the Living Kurna Cultural Centre/Southern Cultural Immersion.

The event was a combination of live music, and traditional and contemporary dance, showcasing Torres Strait Islander culture. It was lovely to see many community members enjoying themselves and to hear wonderful feedback about the event on the night and since.

Some staff also attended Kumangka Palti Yarta Welcome Ceremony for the Adelaide Fringe and Uncle Tamaru's Beyond the Trees event, where our CE Lynne was invited by Uncle Tamaru to give an Acknowledgement of Country in Kurna language.

 Zenadth Kes Ilan night





Uncle Ivan and
Uncle Lewis O'Brien

Our CEO, Lynne, has had the privilege of spending time with Kurna Elders Uncle Dr Lewis Yarlupurka O'Brien, Auntie Lynette Crocker and Uncle Dr Kevin O'Loughlin, listening to stories about Kurna people.

These interviews are part of a project to map significant Kurna sites and stories focused along the river, Karrawirra Pari, in the area that connects the suburbs of Thebarton and Underdale. The project, part-funded by the City of West Torrens Council, aims to support the growth of community awareness about Kurna land and make pre-colonial history more visible in the community. This work is being done in collaboration with Uncle Ivan-Tiwu Copley, who will also share his own knowledge and stories for the project.



Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Reference Group

It's an honor to have the guidance and insight of the Gowrie SA Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Reference Group: Ivan-Tiwu Copley, Eddie Peters, Karri Tamaru Smith, Nicole Gollan, Rodney Welch, Rosemary Wanganeen, and Alex Houthuysen. Their cultural advice is invaluable to us.

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



Supporting staff to attend significant events and cultural learning

Some senior staff and inclusion professionals from the Gowrie SA Inclusion Agency marched from Victoria Square to Veale Gardens to commemorate the Anniversary of the National Apology. A group of educators and children from Thebarton also joined the march. It was a lovely morning and a great opportunity to catch up with Uncle Ivan, Reconciliation South Australia, and current and former Gowrie SA families.

The Inclusion Agency Cultural Group supports the Cultural Circle. The Cultural Group meets regularly and is an opportunity to reflect on the Gowrie SA Reconciliation Action Plan. At the end of 2022, the Cultural Circle shared morning tea from a local Aboriginal caterer. They were joined by Uncle Ivan, Uncle Tamaru, and Greg (Ngarrindjeri lands), all inclusion professionals and other staff from our administration building. Uncle Tamaru gave a memorable Welcome to Country and Uncle Ivan had some of us eating the locally grown plants in the park.

Some staff from across the organisation also engaged in 2 day Cultural Respect and Safety training. This training gives staff the opportunity to continue their learning journey and provides a space for reflective and at times uncomfortable conversations as they explore cultural respect and safety.

National Reconciliation Week breakfast

Several staff attended Reconciliation SA's National Reconciliation Week Breakfast on behalf of Gowrie SA. We encourage staff to share their experience afterwards with the Reconciliation Action Plan Working Group and other staff.





Gowrie SA Annual Reconciliation Walk

All children's program children and their families, and Gowrie SA staff are invited to join our annual National Reconciliation Walk. This year we met in Underdale and Uncle Ivan shared interesting facts about Kaurna land, culture and history during a walk along Karrawirra Pari (Red Gum Forest River).





We were fortunate to meet
Tom Calma AO and to see
Uncle Moogy at recent
events

Some staff also visited
Tauondi for Rec in the West
and to celebrate Tauondi's
30th birthday

