

F.I.R.E. Carrier Covenant est. 2021 as of 2025/2026

[FIRE CARRIER COVENANT 2025-2026](#)

Covenant

We recognise the special place and culture of Aboriginal peoples 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 Dodson, Australian of the Year, National Press Club address, 17 February 2009

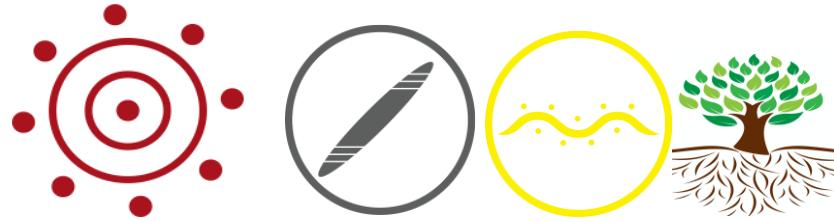
True Reconciliation requires national and local solutions achieved through positive and purposeful partnerships not just for today but for tomorrow. We work for Reconciliation, in partnership with those who believe that there can be an alternative to the present order.

Covenants emphasise the ethos and faith belief of Catholic schools and the Social Justice response they are committed to make as part of their Christian identity. Schools' expressed commitment is reflected in practical goals and actions which they strive to achieve in the year ahead. School covenants express in ways, specific to each school, recognition of the special contribution Aboriginal peoples and their cultures make to Australian society, their relationship and connection to the land, their present position of disadvantage and social exclusion. They declare the school and school community's commitment to stand in solidarity with Aboriginal peoples to achieve true reconciliation and acknowledgement, by all Australians, of their rightful position within Australian society. (*firecarriers Sandhurst.pdf*)

Our School

Reconciliation at St. Joseph's Primary School, located on Yorta Yorta Country, in the town and surrounding lands means fostering genuine relationships built on respect, understanding, and justice between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal peoples. As individuals and as a school community, we have a shared responsibility to acknowledge the deep history and culture of the Traditional Owners of this land, to learn from it, and to work actively toward healing past injustices. This responsibility calls us to listen, engage, and advocate for equity and inclusion in all aspects of our school life.

Reconciliation is central to our identity as a Catholic school, as it reflects the Gospel values of love, justice, and unity, guiding us to create a school environment where every student feels a sense of belonging and respect for their heritage. By embedding Reconciliation in our daily practices, we ensure a future that honours the rich cultural heritage of the Yorta Yorta people and celebrates the diversity of our community.



Our Covenant

At St. Joseph's Catholic Primary School, located on Yorta Yorta Country, the development of our Reconciliation Covenant has been a collaborative and deeply meaningful journey. Guided by the Sandhurst Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Leadership Team, we began by exploring the unique cultural heritage of the Yorta Yorta people and their connection to this land. This process involved consultation with local Aboriginal members, including parent representatives, community members, especially members of the Tomorrow Today Foundation and our school families to ensure the Covenant reflected the voices and aspirations of all stakeholders.

Our Reconciliation Covenant working group includes a diverse range of representatives, such as school leadership, teachers, parents, students, and members of the Sandhurst Aboriginal Team, all united in their commitment to fostering a culture of respect, understanding, and inclusion. Regular meetings are held to discuss and implement strategies that align with the Covenant, ensuring it remains a living document that continues to evolve.

This collaborative effort highlights our dedication to embedding Reconciliation into the heart of our school community. From cultural awareness programs to acknowledgment of significant dates like NAIDOC Week, the Covenant serves as a foundation for our ongoing commitment to justice and unity, reflecting the mission and values of Catholic Education Sandhurst.

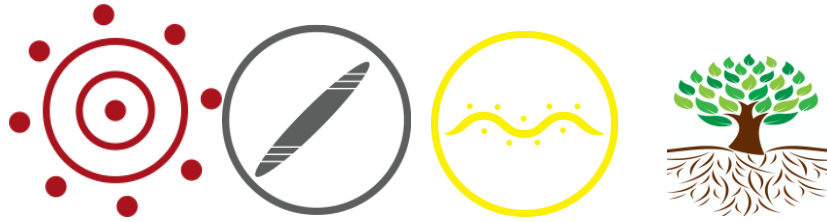
CHILD SAFE STANDARDS

Culturally safe environments Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Cultural Safety is defined as an environment that is safe for Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islanders, where there is no assault, challenge or denial of their identity and experience. (Williams 2008) St Joseph's School takes account of and makes reasonable efforts to accommodate for the diversity of all children in implementing the Child Safe Standards relating to following standard.

Standard 1: A Culturally Safe Environment for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children and Young People

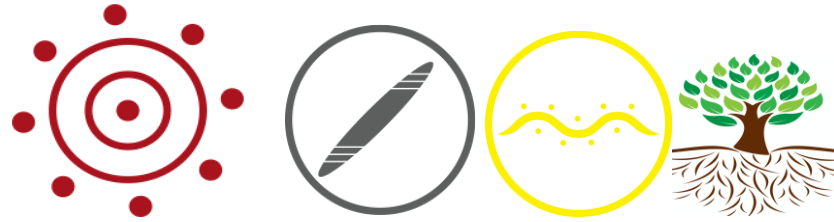
Our Short Term and Long Term Targets

- 6 Months: Revisit the inclusion of Indigenous perspectives in our Curriculum planning Continue to build upon FIRE carrier student leadership.
- 2 Months Review Indigenous perspectives resources
- 2 Years All staff develop an ongoing plan for professional development through consultation with CESL staff.

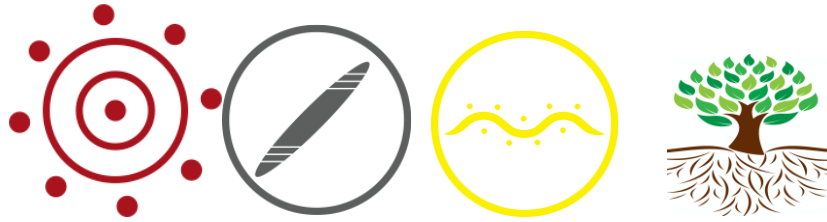


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Spirituality			
Focus Area: Learn , Teach, Share, Grow towards understanding Aboriginal Spirituality (holistic)			
Action	Responsibility	Timeline	Suggested Activities/Resources

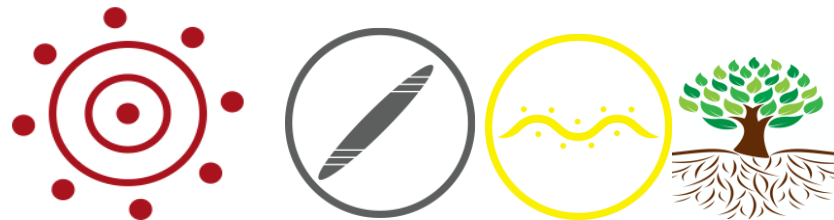


<p>Focus Area: Recognise Cultural Perspectives, Demonstrate Awareness</p> <p>1. Cultural Education:</p> <p>2. Acknowledgment of Country</p> <p>3. Artistic and Literary Celebrations</p>	<p>Principal</p> <p>Catholic Identity Leader/ Aboriginal Torres Strait Islander Leader</p> <p>Student Catholic Identity Leaders</p> <p>Learning and Teaching Leader</p> <p>Classroom Teachers and Specialist Teachers</p>	<p>Term Two 2025</p>	<p>Recognising Spirituality through things such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Using Aboriginal Prayers in classrooms • Liase with Heidi Perry from Tomorrow Today in Benalla to organise a workshop for staff and students on Aboriginal culture, traditions, and spirituality, emphasising connection to the land and the Dreaming. • Learn Aboriginal Songs/Hymns: Yorta Yorta Welcome to Country sung at fortnightly assembly and school Masses. • Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education with the support of the Sandhurst Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Lead Michael Chisolm. • Working with Heidi Perry from Tomorrow Today for support with educational initiatives and the FIRE Carrier program. • Heidi has organised for a NAIDOC Week Assembly on Friday 20th June, 2025. • Working with Indigenous families (Anganya Education Program) • An Elder has been organised to read a story with the students in the afternoon 2:30pm-3:20pm. • Engage, collaborate and consult with local Aboriginal people and the Tomorrow Today Foundation to enrich and enhance, spiritual experiences. • Honour the Aboriginal significant days through prayer • Perform the Aboriginal rituals in Mass and prayer e.g. Message Stick • Incorporate Aboriginal perspectives into the school's Religious Education through the New Source of Life Curriculum .
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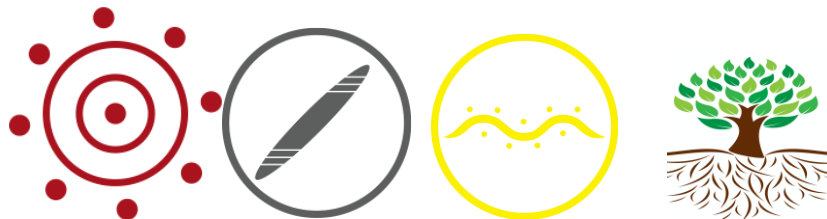
<p>4. Visual Representation</p>	<p>Principal/Deputy Principal/Catholic Identity Leader</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Begin school events and gatherings with an Acknowledgment of Country or Welcome to Country led by local Aboriginal elders when possible. • Create opportunities for students to engage with Aboriginal art, music, and storytelling by inviting local artists and authors to share their work and experiences. • Student/Teacher Aboriginal Art Work in the school Foyer to ensure raised awareness of the importance of the Indigenous Art and Artefacts located in the school foyer. • Display Aboriginal flags, artwork, and symbols prominently within the school grounds as a continuous reminder of respect and recognition.
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Cultural Recognition & Awareness

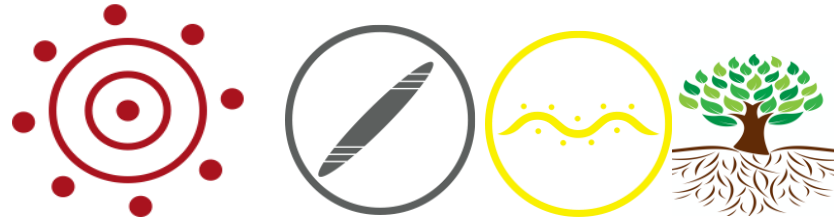
Focus Area: Recognise Cultural Perspectives, Demonstrate Awareness

Action	Responsibility	Timeline	Suggested Activities / Resources
<p>Recognising cultural perspectives and demonstrating awareness</p>	<p>Principal/Deputy Principal Leadership Team Librarian Classroom Teachers/ Specialist Teachers Representatives from CESL and Tomorrow Today Foundation</p>	<p>Semester Two 2025</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Flying the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander flags. • Equipping libraries with an Aboriginal section available to all students. Audit and update resources as required. • Making strong relationships with local elders and inviting local elders to Welcome visitors to Country at significant events. • Older students read Aboriginal library books to junior students. • Acknowledge the traditional custodians of the land you are on. • Read Aboriginal newspapers. Get the Aboriginal perspective on news by reading Aboriginal newspapers such as the Koori Mail or National Indigenous Times and use the websites as made available on this platform to inform staff and use with students. • Watch Aboriginal television. <i>National Indigenous Television</i> (NITV) is broadcasting nationally on digital TV and integrate this information with the Victorian Curriculum items incorporated into St Joseph's Teaching and Learning expectations-where appropriate. • Visit Aboriginal places such as Winton Wetlands as a place of significance to the Yorta Yorta Aboriginal community. • Research Aboriginal Education initiatives and activities at https://www.ceosand.catholic.edu.au/catholicidentity/index.phpFind • Learn about Australian history. Only about a third of Australians know about Australian Aboriginal history. Explore timelines and find out significant events. • <u>NAIDOC Week is predominantly held in the first full week of July and</u> is a time to celebrate Aboriginal history, culture and achievements. Source: NAIDOC Week - Creative Spirits, retrieved from https://www.creativespirits.info/aboriginalculture/history/naidoc-week



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Practical Reconciliation & Justice			
Focus Area: Walk the Journey together, Put Learnings into Practice			
Action	Responsibility	Timeline	Suggested Measurable Target
1. Community Partnerships	Principal/Deputy Principal/Catholic Identity Leader	Semester Two 2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish partnerships with local Aboriginal organisations and community leaders to work collaboratively on reconciliation projects. Major focus with Tomorrow Today Foundation and the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Leaders from CESL.
2. Covenant Development			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure the school's Reconciliation Covenant is reviewed and updated annually by a diverse working group including Aboriginal community members, students, parents, (School Advisory Council) and staff. Facilitate open dialogue sessions where the school community can contribute ideas for reconciliation efforts worked through the School Advisory Council and interested community members/stakeholders.
3. Practical Support			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implement programs to support Aboriginal students and families within the school community, addressing barriers in education, health, and wellbeing. Working closely with Tomorrow Today Foundation.



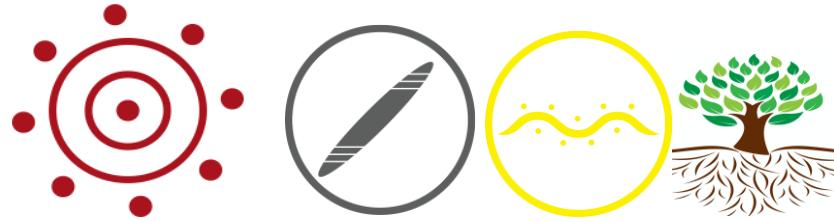
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| | | | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Advocate for systemic changes in education that promote equity and inclusion for Aboriginal students |
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Ecological Stewardship.
Focus Area: Ecological renewal and sustainability depends upon spiritual awareness and an attitude of responsibility – Caring for country.

Action	Responsibility	Timeline	Suggested Measureable Target
<p>1. Recognising ecological stewardship in daily life and school initiatives such as participation in a range of events that highlight the importance of celebrating various days and initiatives focused on ecological stewardship.</p>	<p>Principal/Deputy Principal/Catholic Identity Leader</p>		<p>Spiritual Connection to Nature:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct outdoor prayer and reflection sessions in natural settings to foster a spiritual connection with the land. • Integrate Aboriginal teachings on caring for the environment into sustainability programs. <p>Covenant Development:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure the school’s Reconciliation Covenant is reviewed and updated annually by a diverse working group including Aboriginal community members, students, parents, and staff. • Facilitate open dialogue sessions where the school community can contribute ideas for reconciliation efforts. <p>Practical Support:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implement programs to support Aboriginal students and families within the school community, addressing barriers in education, health, and wellbeing. • Advocate for systemic changes in education that promote equity and inclusion for Aboriginal students. • Caring for country – learn about Aboriginal Spirituality relate to St Joseph



			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learn about totems – what is their importance to the environment. Make connections between the areas totem and St Joseph. • Adopt a totem. Research animals or habitats that are endangered in your area. • Honour the Seasons of Creation (The web of Life) Educate yourself around what foods are available in each season. • Engage in Sandhurst switches off. • Celebrate Earth Hour. • Have a nude food policy at school and encourage support for this from home! • Advocate the expectation of reducing our use of plastic • Use water wisely
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The FIRE Carrier Project is an initiative of the Aboriginal Catholic Ministry, the Opening the Doors Foundation and the Sandhurst Catholic Education Office, to promote and assist Reconciliation through Education in our Schools.

Our School commits to completing or putting steps in place to complete all Actions through Measurable Targets outlined above by the dates set out in the timeline above. A review at the end of school year will be conducted and the plan will be updated and passed to the following year's FIRE Carrier.