



**SOUTH
METRO
JUNIOR**
FOOTBALL LEAGUE

Reflect
Reconciliation Action Plan
April 2022 – September 2023



**RECONCILIATION
ACTION PLAN**

REFLECT



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We acknowledge the Bunurong and Wurundjeri peoples, the Traditional Custodians of the land on which our league operates.

We pay our respects to their Elders, past, present and emerging and acknowledge and respect their continuing cultures, beliefs and connection with the land and waterways, which remain important to the Aboriginal nations of today.

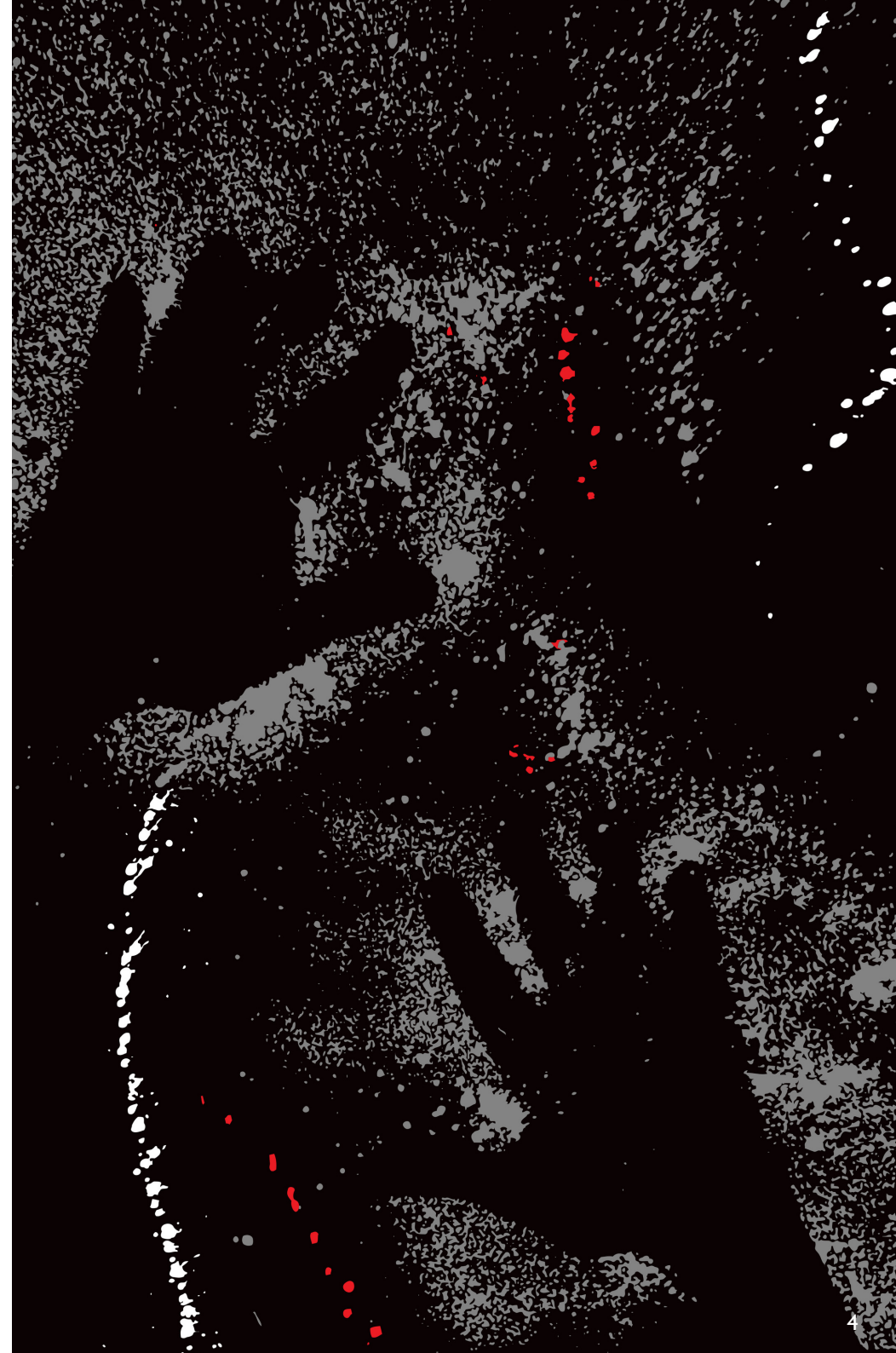
About the Artist

Nicky Winmar has creative flair. Whether it be on the football field or in his new venture as an artist. Nicky's distinct mark is left wherever he goes.

In 2021, that influence materialised into the artwork design of the Saints AFL Sir Doug Nicholls Round guernsey, inspired by Nicky's family, his history and his love of his beloved Saints. Two Willy Wagtails, Nicky's family totem, feature in the design to represent both of his parents, alongside a silhouette of Nicky's iconic 'I'm black and I'm proud' pose.

The stencils seen are inspired by traditional indigenous splatter techniques and feature Nicky's hands which is representative of always having your back.

This artwork is featured in our Reconciliation Action Plan to show the strong connection between community and elite football, the strength of the SMJFL's partnership with the Saints and to pay tribute to one of the most important players in the history of the game and his ongoing stance against racism.





Nicky W

A Message from Reconciliation Australia

Reconciliation Australia welcomes the South Metro Junior Football League to the Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) program with the formal endorsement of its inaugural Reflect RAP.

The South Metro Junior Football League joins a network of more than 1,100 corporate, government, and not-for-profit organisations that have made a formal commitment to reconciliation through the RAP program.

Since 2006, RAPs have provided a framework for organisations to leverage their structures and diverse spheres of influence to support the national reconciliation movement. The program's potential for impact is greater than ever, with close to 3 million people now working or studying in an organisation with a RAP.

The four RAP types — Reflect, Innovate, Stretch and Elevate — allow RAP partners to continuously develop and strengthen reconciliation commitments in new ways. This Reflect RAP will lay the foundations, priming the workplace for future RAPs and reconciliation initiatives.

The RAP program's strength is its framework of relationships, respect, and opportunities, allowing an organisation to strategically set its reconciliation commitments in line with its own business objectives, for the most effective outcomes.

These outcomes contribute towards the five dimensions of reconciliation: race relations; equality and equity; institutional integrity; unity; and historical acceptance.

It is critical to not only uphold all five dimensions of reconciliation, but also increase awareness of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, histories, knowledge, and leadership across all sectors of Australian society.



This Reflect RAP enables the South Metro Junior Football League to deepen its understanding of its sphere of influence and the unique contribution it can make to lead progress across the five dimensions. Getting these first steps right will ensure the sustainability of future RAPs and reconciliation initiatives, and provide meaningful impact toward Australia's reconciliation journey.

Congratulations the South Metro Junior Football League, welcome to the RAP program, and I look forward to following your reconciliation journey in the years to come.

Karen Mundine
Chief Executive Officer
Reconciliation Australia

Chair and Chief Executive Officer Joint Statement

The South Metro Junior Football League (SMJFL) is proud to present its first Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) to its member clubs, players, officials, partners, and stakeholders.

The SMJFL is committed to reconciliation and endeavours to provide all its participants with a safe, supportive, and inclusive environment.

Our RAP is a guiding document, reflective of the league's vision of Australian Football being for everyone. As a junior league with deep connections into our communities we are in a unique position to help change attitudes and build understanding of First Nations cultures and experiences. We are committed to building awareness and ongoing education for SMJFL people of First Nations histories, cultures and contribution to the land and country that we all call home.

Foremost though, our Reflect RAP is a commitment from the SMJFL board and staff to understand the experiences of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families within our league and to create a league that is culturally safe and respectful. Our journey will also enable us to build our knowledge and understanding of the histories of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, the impacts of colonisation and the matters that continue to affect Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples nationally.



Richard Bowen
Chair



Matthew Brown
Chief Executive Office



Chair - Richard Bowen



CEO - Matthew Brown

SMJFL's Vision for Reconciliation

Our league ethos is, “It’s About the Kids”, and through our ongoing work to provide safe and welcoming environments free of discrimination, expectation, or ability, we encourage all young people to participate in Australian Football.

We promote and live by our values of Fun, Accountability, Integrity and Respect (FAIR).

Respect for us means we are free of judgement. We are welcoming and provide an environment of inclusion, celebrating people for who they are. We recognise each person’s unique contribution to our community and the richness that the diversity of all involved in the SMJFL through playing, coaching, umpiring, volunteering, or working brings to our league.

We see our role as helping to create opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to have meaningful roles as volunteers, umpires, participants, and administrators in community football enabling pathways within the broader Australian football Industry. It is often stated that ‘you can’t be what you can’t see’, opportunities such as these will show Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people that they can be anything they want to be in our sport.

Sport is a leveller in society, a vehicle for people of all backgrounds, cultures, genders, sexual orientation, or difference to come together, connect and belong. It is far greater than just the game itself, with thousands of people coming together each week to train and play but also, as importantly, for the social and mental health outcomes of being part of something.

Our vision for reconciliation is to foster a culture of growth, opportunity, and respect to be led by the league and shared across our member clubs. Our focus will be on leadership and education of ourselves, our member clubs and our stakeholders. We will use our influence through our deep connection into our local communities to help create positive social change and use our sport and our clubs to support, acknowledge and celebrate the wisdom and contribution of the oldest continuous culture in the world.

Our Business

The SMJFL has a clear vision to continue to be the industry leader in the administration and delivery of junior sport whilst positively contributing to the community. It lives by its mission to provide kids a safe, supportive, and inclusive environment while promoting health and wellbeing and maximising participation in Australian Football.

Since its establishment in 2012, the SMJFL has had 263 registered players and 10 registered umpires that identify as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

In 2021, having successfully maintained connection through two heavily disrupted seasons due to the pandemic, the league's 25 member clubs fielded 479 teams (108 girls' teams and 371 mixed/boys' teams), comprising 10,950 registered players with age groups ranging from under 8's to under 18's and a successful junior umpiring academy of 647 (573 male, 74 female) umpires.

In 2021 there are 56 SMJFL players that identify as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, making up 0.5% of the total registered players and while only a small percentage of the total players they represent 20 of the 25 clubs in the league. There are currently two umpires within the SMJFL umpire academy that identify as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander.

The league is administered by a small team of dedicated staff and board members to govern and deliver its annual competition.

The SMJFL board is made up of eight volunteer members while the SMJFL itself employs seven full time and one part time employee working across business development, finance, football operations, umpiring, marketing, health promotion and nutrition. Underpinning this small and efficient team is over 15,000 passionate volunteers, mostly parents, that enable 150+ games to be played each weekend from April through to September.

Geographically the SMJFL sits on the lands of both the Bunurung and Wurundjeri peoples of the Kulin Nations and is the largest independent junior sporting league in Australia. Head office is in the local government area of Kingston co-located with the St Kilda Football Club at RSEA Park.

Member clubs cross over six Local Government Council areas – City of Kingston, City of Port Phillip, Bayside City Council, City of Glen Eira, City of Monash and City of Stonnington and land managed by Parks Victoria. Each season over 3,500 games is played across these six local government areas.



Our RAP

The SMJFL is committed to reconciliation and education and has long endeavoured to provide all its participants with a safe, supportive, and inclusive environment. The RAP is the next commitment and step to ensuring an all-inclusive league and will be an important and valuable resource for all current and future member clubs.

The RAP is championed by the CEO to keep staff focussed and accountable for the actions outlined in the RAP document and in the greatest position to influence member clubs.

Our current strategic plan 2022-2024 has clearly outlined our mandate to continually strive for a more inclusive society. Each of our four pillars reference outcomes to this:

Governance

- Ensure the organisation is managed in a way that ensures the long-term viability of the league
- Be an employer of choice
- Work with clubs to provide a safe environment for all players and volunteers

Football

- Manage quality football competitions and development opportunities that are inclusive, safe, and fun
- Provide opportunities for a diverse range of players, coaches, and umpires to participate in Australian Football
- Work with relevant AFL Clubs and AFL Victoria to provide a clear pathway and development opportunities for players and coaches

Community

- Support, develop and collaborate with kids, volunteers, clubs, partners, and other stakeholders
- Provide access to education programs to foster health and wellbeing
- Promote diversity throughout the community to increase participation

Facilities

- Advocate for football facilities that better address current and future needs
- Continue to develop relationships with stakeholders for prospective venues

Narratives about race and racism have resonated with so many in the community, and sporting environments are far from exempt from this. We feel a strong sense of responsibility to be providing education opportunities to our 11,000+ participants, 15,000+ volunteers and 700+ umpires about racism and its ongoing effects and about the strengths and resilience of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, the longest living culture in the world. Our aim is to provide an environment where current and future Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families feel welcomed, feel included and feel they belong in their junior football community.

Our RAP cont'd

As a junior league we also believe that we can positively affect social change through our Reconciliation Action Plan and in doing so will be a stronger and more diverse league with more Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander players, coaches, umpires, and club administrators in our community competition.

At its heart we understand that to authentically implement the plan, there is work to be done internally to build knowledge, awareness, and relationships with First Nations people and to explore our own history, developing an understanding of the experiences of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families within our league.

The RAP framework provides the three core pillars of relationships, respect, and opportunities, enables us to move our intention to action and take our place in supporting the national reconciliation movement.

Some of our key commitments include:

- Developing a culturally aware and engaged workplace and competition that is safe for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to work, play, coach, or volunteer
- Changing our everyday operations by embedding actions that contribute to reconciliation that include our communication, visual representation, policies, procedures, and partnerships
- Continuing to support and encourage our member clubs to participate and celebrate the AFL's Sir Doug Nicholls Round, played during National Reconciliation Week (NRW)

Our RAP Working Group

The development of our RAP was overseen by an established RAP Working Group who were identified by their passion to grow their knowledge and understanding of reconciliation. The RAP Working Group includes the following SMJFL representatives:

- Board Chair
- Board Member
- Chief Executive Officer (CEO) and RAP Champion
- Business Manager
- Football Operations Manager
- Marketing Coordinator
- External Consultant

SMJFL's work with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples

Next Generation Academy (NGA)

Since 2017 the SMJFL has partnered with St Kilda Football Club to deliver a collaborative football pathways program for talented players aged 13-16. The NGA was launched to increase the diversity of young players in junior football, to change the face of AFL to better represent the community within which we live. Two players from every age group are nominated by each club within the SMJFL to ensure there is representation across the league. Clubs that have players that identify as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander can nominate these players above the two players to be invited into the NGA squads.

The focus for player involvement is to provide an environment for development over several years with a potential talent pathway. NGA squad members are provided leadership and development opportunities and are encouraged to share their learnings back into their community clubs. With the training and experiences NGA participants receive they become a pool of young people with the potential to be community club coaches, administrators, and umpires.

In the five years the NGA program has run there have been 15 participants that identify as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. In 2021 there were four Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in coaching and supporting roles.

We are pleased that several of our community partners and local councils have a commitment to the national reconciliation movement through a Reconciliation Action Plan and we look forward to working with and learning from them on our reconciliation journey.





Relationships



The SMJFL is an organisation built from family and community. Its growth to becoming one of the leading junior sporting organisations nationally has been achieved through developing relationships with the community and organisations that operate within that community. We have a clear understanding that the foundations of building a strong relationship or partnership come only through trust, collaboration, and integrity. It is with this same understanding that we will commence our journey to connecting with and building relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and organisations.

Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
1 Establish and strengthen mutually beneficial relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and organisations.	Identify Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and organisations within our local area or sphere of influence.	Oct 2022	Business Manager
	Research best practice and principles that support partnerships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and organisations.	Oct 2022	Business Manager
2 Build relationships through celebrating National Reconciliation Week (NRW).	Circulate Reconciliation Australia’s NRW resources and reconciliation materials to our staff.	May 2022, 2023	Marketing Coordinator
	RAP Working Group members to participate in an external NRW event.	27 May- 3 June 2022, 2023	Marketing Coordinator
	Encourage and support staff and senior leaders to participate in at least one external event to recognise and celebrate NRW.	27 May- 3 June 2022, 2023	Marketing Coordinator



Relationships cont'd



Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
3 Promote reconciliation through our sphere of influence	Communicate our commitment to reconciliation to all staff and stakeholders.	Apr 2022	Board Chair
	Acknowledge our commitment of reconciliation with an Aboriginal influenced SMJFL logo designed by a local aboriginal artist on all footballs used throughout the season.	Apr 2023	CEO
	Engage Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families within the SMJFL to design an Interleague guernsey for 2023.	Jan 2023	Marketing Coordinator
	Identify external stakeholders that our organisation can engage with on our reconciliation journey.	Oct 2022	CEO
	Identify RAP and other like-minded organisations that we could approach to collaborate with on our reconciliation journey.	Oct 2022	Business Manager
4 Promote positive race relations through anti-discrimination strategies.	Research best practice and policies in areas of race relations and anti-discrimination.	March 2023	CEO
	Conduct a review of HR policies and procedures to identify existing anti-discrimination provisions, and future needs.	Oct 2022	CEO



Respect



Respect for us means we are free of judgement. We are a stronger organisation and league for the cultural diversity of the people that we have within it. We benefit from the differences in voice, skills, thinking and life experiences. We know we have much to learn from and about our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families involved in our league and the Boonwurrung and Wurundjeri peoples, the Traditional Custodians of the land on which we work, live and play.

Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
5 Increase understanding, value and recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, histories, knowledge, and rights through cultural learning.	Develop a business case for increasing understanding, value and recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, histories, knowledge, and rights within our organisation.	Aug 2023	CEO
	Conduct a review of cultural learning needs within our organisation.	Oct 2022	CEO
	Conduct research and document activities member clubs have initiated to recognise Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, histories, knowledge, and rights.	Jun 2023	Marketing Coordinator
6 Demonstrate respect to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples by observing cultural protocols.	Develop an understanding of the local Traditional Owners or Custodians of the lands and waters within our organisation's operational area.	Apr 2023	Business Manager
	Increase staff's understanding of the purpose and significance behind cultural protocols, including Acknowledgement of Country and Welcome to Country protocols.	Nov 2022	Business Manager
7 Build respect for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and histories by celebrating NAIDOC Week.	Raise awareness and share information amongst our staff about the meaning of NAIDOC Week.	Jun 2022	Football Operations Manager
	Introduce our staff to NAIDOC Week by promoting external events in our local area.	First week in July 2022	Football Operations Manager
	RAP Working Group to participate in an external NAIDOC Week event.	First week in July 2022	Football Operations Manager



Opportunities



The SMJFL looks forward to seeking and developing partnership opportunities with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander member organisations and communities.

Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
8 Improve employment outcomes by increasing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander recruitment, retention, and professional development.	Develop a business case for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment within our organisation.	Nov 2022	CEO
	Review all Human Resource employment policies and processes to encourage and facilitate applications from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.	Nov 2022	CEO
	Build understanding of current Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staffing to inform future employment and professional development opportunities.	Dec 2022	CEO
9 Increase Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander supplier diversity to support improved economic and social outcomes.	Develop a business case for procurement from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander owned businesses.	Mar 2023	Business Manager
	Investigate Supply Nation membership.	Dec 2022	CEO



Governance



Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
10 Maintain an effective RAP Working Group (RWG) to drive governance of the RAP.	Maintain a RWG to govern RAP implementation.	Apr 2022	CEO
	Draft a Terms of Reference for the RWG.	Apr 2022	Executive Management Team
	Establish Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander representation on the RWG.	Jan 2023	CEO
11 Provide appropriate support for effective implementation of RAP commitments.	Define resource needs for RAP implementation.	Apr 2022	CEO
	Engage senior leaders in the delivery of RAP commitments.	Oct 2022	CEO
	Define appropriate systems and capability to track, measure and report on RAP commitments.	Jun 2022	Business Manager
12 Build accountability and transparency through reporting RAP achievements, challenges and learnings both internally and externally.	Complete and submit the annual RAP Impact Measurement Questionnaire to Reconciliation Australia.	30 Sep 2022	CEO
13 Continue our reconciliation journey by developing our next RAP.	Register via Reconciliation Australia's website to begin developing our next RAP.	Feb 2023	Marketing Coordinator



For any queries, contact:

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