

Macedon Ranges Truth & Reconciliation Group

Draft Strategic Plan 01.08.24

This plan is a living document based on consultations undertaken between MRTRG and Traditional Owners, First Nations people living in the Macedon Ranges Shire, Yoorrook Justice commission staff and local stakeholders during 2023 and 2024. The document is designed to evolve and change based on engagement with stakeholders.

Statement of Intent:

“We aim to promote deeper understanding, respect and justice for and with First Nations Peoples in the Macedon Ranges Shire. We also aim to become more aware, respectful and understanding of the First Nations cultures, knowledge, experience and country. We understand that all members of our community will gain from greater knowledge and understanding of Dja Dja Wurrung, Taungurung & Wurundjeri cultures, country and our shared histories.

We serve to strengthen First Nations People's right to self-determination, equal voice and equality of opportunity and outcomes while promoting a Central Victorian identity that reflects our true history and celebrates diverse culture in relational reconciliation.”

MRTRG Ideas for Action	Wurundjeri	Dja Dja Wurrung	Taungurung
Education and communication			
<u>Community education</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Connect and collaborate with existing groups in the area who support Traditional Owner goals to share knowledge, resources and promotional opportunities. Including, but not limited to Castlemaine Reconciliation Group, Bio Links Alliance and Land Care. ● Apply for funding through the 'Thriving Communities Project' to improve Indigenous presence and public education opportunities at Hanging Rock (Ngannelong). ● Facilitate public information workshops in collaboration with Aboriginal Heritage Victoria to inform local landholders of site and artefact registration process, record of oral shared history, subsequent protocol, Traditional Owner, landholder and visitor rights and responsibilities. ● Organise public anti-racism / cultural awareness workshops to make our community a safe place to identify as First Nations. ● Work with local historical groups to encourage truth telling regarding the impact on First Nations people of colonisation and promote local history education. ● Explore historical archives at La Trobe University, Melbourne University and State Parliament of Victoria in partnership with the First Peoples Assembly of Victoria and Minister for Indigenous Affairs. ● Encourage local training opportunities, including Aboriginal Mental Health First Aid courses. 		
	<p>Aunty Gail is currently working on a Wurundjeri language pocket dictionary.</p> <p>Encourage distribution of the</p>	<p>Project officer for language repatriation Harley Dunnoly Lee is working on a dictionary of Dja Dja Wurrung language.</p>	<p>Distribute Taungurung language dictionaries to community groups, schools and libraries to promote awareness of the local language.</p>

	pocket dictionary to schools and to the wider community.	<p>Raise awareness of the need for funding support for language programs.</p> <p>Encourage community engagement with Djaara displays and exhibitions.</p> <p>Maryborough train station has a permanent movie/exhibition and a Djaara garden. Hepburn shire website has the movie "Peaks, rivers and wetlands". There is a permanent exhibition at Victory park in Castlemaine. Barry Golding has a blog "Barry Goanna".</p>	Collaborate with Taungurung to develop educational apps, school tours and audio tours.
<u>Education in Schools</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Connect with schools and confirm what engagement they currently have with Traditional Owners of the land they are on. Provide information on what is currently available eg. Cultural tours and excursions. • Promote recognition of Traditional Owners, naming and signage in schools. eg. produce signs written in Traditional Owner language and English, ensuring that the name is provided by Traditional Owners, not recommended or requested by others. • Support existing events at schools. Generally each school has an 'education champion' that leads activities during Reconciliation Week etc. 		
<u>Businesses and Cultural and Information Centres</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support existing visitor information centres, libraries and businesses to distribute Traditional Owner information and language dictionaries, promote cultural tours and First Nations community-made products and services. 		
		Community support for the reconciliation and settlement agreement team at Djaara to	Work to help establish a First Nations cultural centre within Kyneton.

		discuss future Malmsbury Youth Justice Centre land use.	
<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Recognition, naming and signage</u></p>	<p>Work to identify opportunities in collaboration with Council for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Developing a plan where naming is involved: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Advocate to council for co-naming. Renaming is difficult, but happening more often. ○ Advocate that all new buildings be named in First Nations language. ● Boundary signage recognising Traditional Owner land. ● Add interpretive signage for existing street and place names (eg. who are the people that streets/places are named after and what did they do?) ● Commemorations/plaques/statues representing First Nations history and accurate contact history including massacres. ● Interpretive signs regarding names and uses of plants and animals (eg. Malmsbury Commons, Black Hill, Daly Nature Reserve, the Pines, Jacksons Creek in Gisborne) for use by community & schools. (precedent set with Willim Moo-ree / Mt William). ● Adding markers of interest via walking/hiking apps such as All Trails. ● Promote photos online of existing interpretive signage across the region (eg. Google maps). ● Promote use of name of Country in addressing as per Australia Post protocols to Council, business, etc. ● Promote the use of Geboor or Geburh, the Woi Wurrung name for Mt. Macedon. ● Explore 'Night markets' at Ngannelong/Hanging Rock, a place for meeting and trading at particular times of year. 		
	<p>Utilise Woi Wurrung language for naming of streets, places, waterways, etc (eg. Nanyilong/Hanging Rock, Geboor/Mt Macedon, Willim Moor-ee/Mt William).</p> <p>Allies should contact the CEO of Corporations/TOs for permission before contacting local schools, libraries, etc. to promote Naming</p>	<p>Use the 'Request for Use of Dja Dja Wurrung Language' booking process online for any place/building name requests.</p> <p>Improve signage to direct people visiting Malmsbury to the Malmsbury Common (precinct sign does not currently list the Malmsbury Commons).</p>	<p>Advocate for Taungurung place/street names and historical signage, emphasising Taungurung language. Eg. Black Hill Nature Reserve.</p>

	changes. People are already working on this locally, e.g room-naming in libraries.		
<u>Media and engagement</u>	Promote and elevate First Nations voices and share local history (truth telling around First Encounter) and culture through: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Online channels (Facebook, Instagram, website and email list) • Book Clubs at Goldfields Libraries • Regular column in local newspapers (Kyneton Connect, Midland Express, Malmsbury Mail) 		
Cultural sustainability and caring for country			
<u>Return of land/ joint management</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advocate to (and work with) Council to support Traditional Owners to secure and reclaim land of significance, including for purposes of protection and preservation of land and culture and for community education. • Advocate to Council for the implementation of the cultural and heritage objectives of the Hanging Rock Strategic Plan. 		
	Look at local opportunities for landback/joint management such as experiences of Wil-im-ee Moor-ring (Mt. William Quarry), Jackson's Creek biik wurrdha, and Sunbury Earth Rings. Advocate for the return of specific sites identified by Wurendjeri Traditional Owners in the Macedon Ranges. Churches have been resistant to hand back land. Encourage		Support suggestions for the return of specific sites identified by Taungurung in the Macedon Ranges.

	<p>them to explore this with Traditional Owners, 'Pay the Rent', and march in NAIDOC week.</p> <p>Encourage farmers/landholders to contact Naarap team to perform cultural burning.</p>		
<p><u>Community welfare and support</u></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Kyneton based accommodation business 'Flophouse' would like to explore how they can provide safe, short-term accommodation for Indigenous women escaping domestic violence. They are currently trialling the provision of this service with 'Orange Door'. • https://www.vic.gov.au/about-the-orange-door • https://www.flophouse.com.au/ • Respect Victoria leads the 16 days of activism against gendered violence here in Victoria. 25th November - 10th December. • Broader housing support: Flophouse could look at short term leases for aboriginal people who are coming to Melbourne for work and need a place to stay. 	<p>Community welfare and support may be best facilitated by Orange Door and other service providers.</p>	
<p><u>Protecting and valuing culture</u></p>	<p>Approach local landholders through gatherings and direct conversations to hand back artefacts to Traditional Owners and register significant sites. Reassure local landholders through fact-sheets dispelling myths about fears of losing land. People can register artefacts through "First people's state relations" through the relevant TO group.</p> <p>Support and promote existing events during Reconciliation Week and NAIDOC Week.</p> <p>Facilitate/present additional cultural events throughout the year.</p>		

<p><u>Offering skills that may be of use to Traditional Owner networks</u></p>	<p>Conduct a skills audit of MRTRG to see if any are relevant for Traditional Owner needs: Eg. Event management and production, governance, communication, accounting, project management, advocacy, marketing, arboriculture and more.</p>		
<p><u>Events and gatherings</u></p>	<p>Aunty Gail suggests we send this complete strategic plan and skills audit to the Wurundjeri corporation.</p>	<p>Donna suggested that this kind of offer is preceded by building relationships with First Nations Residents directly.</p>	
	<p>Promote and book existing Traditional Owner cultural experiences each year. For example wawa biik, Wurundjeri Cultural Tours, Dumawul Tours, Uncle Rick Nelson's Waaman Tours.</p> <p>Create events for people to connect, learn, recognise, and for community relationships to form between Traditional Owners and settlers/migrants.</p> <p>Ideas include, but not limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stalls at local markets - provide information (QR codes). Offer 'mentoring services' directly to First Nations Residents. • "Share the Table" community lunch or "Feast of Stories" to foster connections and networking. • Music concerts for local First Nations artists • Collaborations between Indigenous and non-indigenous artists • Art exhibitions - maybe Marykia Males work (artist from Djaara) or Dakota Nelson • Invite Indigenous Craft people to a crafternoon • For future Wattle Day celebrations we could look at the 'feminist aboriginal perspective' of wattles. Perhaps focusing on gender equity, a priority area of council. Include a celebration of changing First Nations seasons. 		
	<p>Contact Charley @ Wurundjeri to ask about tours of Sunbury Earth Rings - Uncle Dave or Uncle Bill usually do talks out there.</p>	<p>Promote Dumawul Tours - 'Dive into Dja Dja Wurrung' Country https://dumawul.com.au/</p>	

<p><u>Helping to facilitate better consultation of Traditional Owners around planning and development</u></p>	<p>Hold Council accountable to RAP commitments by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● attending council meetings ● writing to councillors ● continue engagement with the RAP working group ● Encourage a round table between Traditional Owners and Macedon ranges council. (Castlemaine has a round table chaired by Uncle Rick that runs every 3 months) ● Learn more about Victorian Aboriginal and Local Government Strategy (VALGS), and how/if council is implementing this.
<p><u>Encouraging local support of First Nations-made products/businesses</u></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Encourage local businesses and Council to seek out Traditional Owner and First Nations makers and suppliers. For example Djakitj. We can look at Council's procurement policy to see if First Nations businesses are prioritised. Explore policy exemptions or weighting for procurement from First Nations businesses. ● Promote Kinway or Supply Nation - commerce website. ● Promote local First Nations makers/suppliers across MRTRG communication channels ● Advocate to council for First Nations artists to create art installations in public spaces
<p><u>Pay The Rent Schemes</u></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Promote www.paytherent.net.au across MRTRG communication channels and at markets. ● Explore local Pay the Rent schemes through local council or other business arms. ● Set up a grassroots Pay The Rent scheme such as www.castlemainepaytherent.net - this needs to be predicated on good relationships with Traditional Owners first. ● Feedback from First Nations people on 'Pay The Rent' language is that it could be more divisive than healing in the community. 'Rent' is also a western framing. Perhaps a 'caring' or 'living on country' contribution could more appropriate.
<h2>Truth Telling</h2>	
<p><u>How to acknowledge 26th January in the "Macedon Ranges"?</u></p>	<p>Organise and hold truth telling events annually on 26th January.</p> <p>Do Traditional Owners want to hold an event acknowledging the 26th January in the "Macedon Ranges" such as a Dawn Reflection or Day of Mourning, or a Reflection Walk around Malmsbury Commons?</p>

	Collaborate with Council on 26th January events. Base events on what local First Nations communities and Traditional Owners request. (Daylesford hold a Terra Nullius breakfast each year).]		
	Wurunderji Woi Wurrung request that the Australian flag be flown at half-mast by Council on 26 January as a mark of respect to First Nations people.		
<u>Supporting the work of the Yoorook Justice Commission</u>	Support and amplify communications from Yoorook Justice Commission (social media and newsletter.) Facilitate a series of town hall events in the “Macedon Ranges” with the Yoorook Justice Commission, and Traditional Owners to encourage landholders to hand back artefacts, and acknowledge their current custodianship of important sites.		
	Support local submissions to Yoorook. For example Waterloo Flat and The Pines, Gisborne.	Support local submissions to Yoorook.	Support local submissions to Yoorook. Support the Baynton / Glenhope First Nations Learning Group.
also see ‘Media and Engagement’ above.			

MRTRG acknowledges the Dja Dja Wurrung, Taungurung and Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung Peoples, Traditional Owners and Custodians of the Macedon Ranges. We pay our respect to their Elders past, present and emerging. We acknowledge sovereignty has never been ceded and Australia was and always will be Aboriginal land.

MRTRG thanks Macedon Ranges Shire Council for providing grant funding to support the development of this strategic plan.

For further details, or to join MRTRG and support the implementation of the plan, visit: <https://mrtrg.com.au/> or contact us by email at reconciliation@mrtrg.com.au.