



## F.I.R.E. Carrier Covenant est. 2022

### 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 emphasize 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: St Mary's Inglewood

St Mary's is located on the traditional lands of the Dja Dja Wurrung. We believe that reconciliation is the ability to recognise and accept the hurts of the past and move forward with compassion, inclusion and acceptance and working in unison with indigenous peoples. We need to listen with great respect to indigenous people and learn about the connections the land our school is on has to the past, present and future. Reconciliation is important to St Mary's because our school community will continue to build unity, acceptance and a deeper knowledge of the past in order to have a brighter future.



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### Our Covenant

Our school community was presented with ideas for Reconciliation in our local community by the Sandhurst Aboriginal Team, who were and are involved in the continuing development of our Covenant. The whole St Mary's staff were consulted throughout the development and review of our Covenant.

## CHILD SAFE STANDARDS

### Culturally safe environments

The schools Mary's Inglewood 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.

#### **5.1 Schools must establish culturally safe environments in which the diverse and unique identities and experiences of Aboriginal children, young people and students are respected and valued**

### Actions

1. In endorsing and documenting the following activities contained within this FIRE Carrier covenant, Our School, St Mary's Primary School Inglewood, commits to completing or putting steps in place to complete all actions through measurable targets outlined by the dates set out in the timeline included.
2. This FIRE Carrier covenant will be made accessible on the school's website to ensure adherence to the child safe standard referred to in the document.
3. A review at the end of the school year will be conducted and the plan will be updated and passed to the following year's FIRE Carrier coordinator.

## Our Short Term and Long Term Targets

6 Months

12 Months

2 Year



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<b>Spirituality</b> <b>Focus Area: Learn , Teach, Share, Grow towards understanding Aboriginal Spirituality (holistic)</b>				
Action	At St Mary's we	We are working towards	Timeline	Responsibility
Engage, collaborate and consult with Aboriginal people to enrich and enhance, spiritual experiences for staff, student and community.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work with colleagues in the Aboriginal Network and CES Aboriginal team.</li> <li>• Ensure protocols and knowledge are accurate.</li> <li>• Encourage students that identify as Indigenous to be proud and celebrate their culture.</li> <li>• Use the prayer and liturgy materials provided by CEO Staff for Staff Meetings and PDs prepared during Aboriginal significant days.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use the message stick during reading of the Word at assemblies &amp; liturgies.</li> <li>• Incorporate Aboriginal Creation Stories into prayer, liturgies, library sessions.</li> <li>• Take retreats, excursions to significant Aboriginal sites i.e. Melville Caves, Kooyoora National Park</li> </ul>	Dec 2025	FIRE Carriers
Honour the Aboriginal significant days through prayer			Current	5-6 Leaders
Perform the Aboriginal rituals in Mass and prayer e.g. Acknowledgment of country and Message Stick			2025	Staff and Student Prayer leaders  Indigenous Co-Ordinator



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<b>Cultural Recognition &amp; Awareness</b> <b>Focus Area: Recognise Cultural Perspectives, Demonstrate Awareness</b>			
<b>Action</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>	<b>Timeline</b>	<b>Suggested Activities / Resources</b>
<p>Embrace Aboriginal stories and culture within Office ceremonies</p> <p>Publicly display our schools respect for Aboriginal people.</p> <p>Engage in professional development and cross cultural opportunities to better cater for the needs of Aboriginal students in our schools</p> <p>Raise awareness of Opening the Doors Foundation (OTDF) and the Cathy Freeman Foundation.</p>	All staff	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Acknowledge Country at staff meetings and events where appropriate.</li> <li>• Localise Acknowledgment of Country as much as possible using local photos / images</li> <li>• Exhibit FIRE Carrier Flame and FIRE Bowl in a prominent position</li> <li>• Work with staff to assist them to Incorporate Aboriginal perspectives in curriculum.</li> <li>• Recognise with respect, dates of significance.</li> <li>• Share knowledge of culture at staff meetings and learning days.</li> <li>• Appoint a staff member as a FIRE Carrier leader and perform, ceremony with the FIRE Carriers and the Aboriginal team from CES.</li> <li>• Explore the Aboriginal story of the land and people on which St. Mary's is situated.</li> <li>• Book swap and/or colour day to raise money and awareness.</li> <li>• Ensure the library is updated with Indigenous books each year.</li> <li>• 'Stomp Out the Gap' Cathy Freeman Foundation.</li> </ul>



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<b>Practical Reconciliation &amp; Justice</b> <b>Focus Area: Walk the Journey together, Put Learnings into Practice</b>			
<b>Action</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>	<b>Timeline</b>	<b>Suggested Measurable Target</b>
<p>Take Practical Measures toward Reconciliation and Justice</p> <p>Acknowledge and teach the 'true' history of Australia</p> <p>Empower the FIRE Carrier leaders to share the learning and message within the school</p>	All staff	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Display the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander flags.</li> <li>• Teach and learn the truths of history.</li> <li>• Display and maintain Aboriginal artefacts.</li> <li>• Make links to Victorian curriculum.</li> <li>• Provide opportunities for FIRE Carrier leaders to pass on their knowledge and learning.</li> </ul>



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<b>Ecological Stewardship.</b> <b>Focus Area: Ecological renewal and sustainability depends upon spiritual awareness and an attitude of responsibility – Caring for country.</b>			
<b>Action</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>	<b>Timeline</b>	<b>Suggested Measurable Target</b>
Take Practical Measures toward teaching and learning of how Indigenous people cared for and lived off the land  Engage in Sandhurst switches off. Celebrate Earth Hour.  Learn the Dja Dja Wurrung's 6 seasons.	All staff	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Explore and learn from Indigenous people/s, customs, practices and ecological stewardship. (Care for Country)</li> <li>• Provide opportunities for the whole school to be engaged and immersed in particular ways to help the land and country.</li> <li>• All staff and students will know about the 6 seasons of the Dja Dja Wurrung.</li> </ul>

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 the school year will be conducted and the plan will be updated and passed to the following year's FIRE Carrier.