



Annual Report 2024-2025

reconciliation



victoria



Acknowledgement of Country

Reconciliation Victoria (Rec Vic) acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of Country throughout Victoria, and recognises First Peoples' continuing connection to lands, waters, and community. We pay our respects to Elders past and present who carry the memories, traditions, cultures, and aspirations of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, and who forge the path ahead for emerging leaders.

We dedicate ourselves to working respectfully and in allyship with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. We seek to listen and amplify the voices of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in all areas of our work.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander readers please note: this report may contain images and references to people who have passed on, read with care.

About Us

Established in 2002, Rec Vic was formed following the recommendation by the Council for Aboriginal Reconciliation to create state-level bodies and a national body, Reconciliation Australia, to continue the unfinished business of reconciliation.

We are the statewide body promoting reconciliation in Victoria and working to advance deeper understanding, respect, and justice for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

Rec Vic works closely with the Victorian Government, Local Reconciliation Groups, the Education sector, Local Government, corporate sector and broader community, facilitating connections between these stakeholders to support initiatives to make significant and widespread progress in reconciliation.

Our work revolves around strong partnerships and relationships. We engage with the Australian Reconciliation Network (ARN), which comprises state- and territory-based reconciliation organisations and Reconciliation Australia. The ARN shares information and ideas amongst its members, who also collaborate on issues of joint advocacy.

Rec Vic is governed by a skills-based Board, with four First Nations members, including a First Nations Co-Chair who works alongside our non-Indigenous Co-Chair.

To ensure our work is guided by First Peoples' voices, knowledge, perspectives, and input, we also engage with Rec Vic's First Peoples' Cultural Council.

Our Purpose

Rec Vic's purpose is to provide leadership in the movement to build support, understanding, and action to achieve genuine and meaningful reconciliation in Victoria.

Meaningful reconciliation has many elements including raising awareness of the causes and realities of colonisation's impact on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, addressing racism, supporting the processes of Treaty, and Truth-telling, and working for fairness and social justice.

Our Vision

All Victorians acknowledge our shared history and the ongoing impact of colonisation on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, and collectively journey towards genuine reconciliation that is fair, just, respectful, and transformative.

Our Mission

To bravely lead reconciliation across Victoria.

Our Values

- We are brave
- We are informed by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Voices
- We stand strongly against racism
- We listen, reflect, and act
- We value reciprocity and collaboration
- We include all Victorians

Board Members

Aunty Gina Bundle OAM
First Nations Co-Chair

Andrew Gunstone
Non-Indigenous Co-Chair

Keith Gove
Secretary

Tony Stephen
Treasurer

Tom Cazaly
Fiona Machin
Nicole Bloomfield
Jamey Peterson

First Peoples' Cultural Council Members

Aunty Vicki Clark OAM
Aunty Gina Bundle OAM
Uncle Tony McCartney
Aunty Karen Lovett
Daniel Ross
Maylene Slater-Burns
Jillian West
(until October 2024)

Staff

Alistair King
CEO (from August 2024)

Clare Corbet
Volunteers Program Coordinator
(from September 2024)

Vicky Grosser
LRG Support Officer
(from November 2024)

Emily Hui
Education Officer
(from May 2025)

Daniel Devlin
Communications Officer
(from May 2025)

Peter Redden
(March to May 2025)

Volunteers

Julie Cattlin
Ricki Spencer
Olivia Giannios
Kelly Ziccone
Lauren Thomas

Message from the Co-Chairs

Aunty Gina Bundle OAM and Andrew Gunstone



This has been an incredible year for reconciliation in Victoria! The Yoorrook Justice Commission handed its Final Report to the Victorian Parliament, and the State Treaty Bill has recently been passed by the Victorian Parliament. Victoria has now become the first jurisdiction in the country to have implemented all three key areas of the Uluru Statement from the heart – Voice, Treaty, and Truth!

Reconciliation Victoria remains resolutely supportive of the Uluru Statement from the Heart and has worked hard throughout the year to promote and educate Truth and Treaty among the wider community. We will continue to support Truth and Treaty by educating the community about the benefits that will flow to all Victorians.

Closer to home, we have developed our five-year 2024–2029 Strategic Plan. Our staff and Executive engaged in workshop sessions to map out how strategic priorities would be delivered operationally, and staff have undertaken detailed business planning. Reconciliation Victoria has also encountered some financial challenges during the year however the corner has now been turned and the year ahead shows strengthening trends.

We sincerely thank and acknowledge the wonderful contributions of outgoing First Nations Board Co-Chair, Dr Emily Poelina-Hunter, First Peoples Cultural Council member Jillian West, and staff members Anna Van Vliet and Jude Rangì. We also gratefully thank all the wonderful Reconciliation Victoria Board members, First Peoples Cultural Council members, staff, volunteers, members, local reconciliation groups, partners, and friends for their incredible work they are doing in progressing reconciliation in Victoria.

Engaging in substantive reconciliation is challenging and difficult work, particularly over the past two years since the Voice Referendum, a period which has seen increased racism and push backs against reconciliation. We are aware of the risk of burnout among our reconciliation supporters and urge everyone to continue to support each other in advocating and educating the wider community about the importance of reconciliation.

We also hope that everyone in the Reconciliation Victoria family look after themselves over the summer break and come back refreshed for an eventful 2026!

Yours in reconciliation,
Aunty Gina Bundle OAM and Professor Andrew Gunstone

Message from the CEO

Alistair King



2024–25 was both a challenging and inspiring year. There were major developments in Treaty and Truth-telling which Rec Vic actively supported through activation of the Local Reconciliation Group (LRG) network and community education work.

There were also significant cost pressures that impacted on Rec Vic's operational capacity. These related to increased demand for our services from organisations seeking advice and support as well as the increasing number of LRGs. Some sources of revenue also closed off around the start of this period which impacted all areas of our work.

A further factor was staff turnover in the previous financial year which resulted in a significant loss of corporate knowledge.

As a result of these factors, it was necessary for Rec Vic to undertake a reset. We closely reviewed our range of activity and implemented a tight focus on core business. By the end of 2024–25, key initiatives had been put in place to build our impact and revenue base, and these foundations will be built upon in the coming years.

Activity in education continued at a lower level until the latter part of the year when the appointment of an ongoing Education Officer galvanised our activity in this area.

The engagement of an LRG Support Officer elevated our engagement and revitalised our relationship with the LRG network. This was timely given the need to educate the community about Treaty and Truth-telling, and the key role LRGs can play in this.

I would like to pay tribute to the staff of Rec Vic who operated magnificently throughout this period and displayed a deep commitment to reconciliation. Their dedication is matched by their professionalism and skill in what have, at times, been trying conditions.

I would also like to acknowledge the support of the Board, in particular the members of the Executive. I have greatly appreciated their expertise and dedication and the strong support they have provided to me personally and to Rec Vic's staff.

Alistair King

Treaty and Truth-telling



FIRST PEOPLES'
ASSEMBLY OF
VICTORIA



TREATY
AUTHORITY



YOORROOK
Justice Commission

Treaty

A key focus of Rec Vic in 2024–25 was promoting and educating non-indigenous Victorians about Treaty and Truth-telling. We worked closely with peak bodies – the First Peoples' Assembly of Victoria, Treaty Authority, and Yoorrook Justice Commission.

We also played an important role as a conduit for information from these bodies to LRGs across the state.

Rec Vic's 2024 Annual General Meeting focused on Treaty and Truth-telling and featured **Commissioner Sue-Anne Hunter** (Yoorrook Justice Commission), **Rueben Berg** (First Peoples Assembly of Victoria) and **Duean White** (Treaty Authority).

At our LRG Forum in October 2024, we asked LRGs to share details of what they were doing to support Treaty and Truth-telling and used this to share innovative and creative approaches, as well as gaining an understanding of how Rec Vic could support LRGs' community education activities.

As mentioned in Local Government on page 4, Rec Vic also partnered with the MAV and VAN to plan and deliver the **Strengthening Councils Treaty Awareness and Information Pilot Project**.

Rec Vic staff were keen participants in two of the First Peoples Assembly's Treaty Day Out events, and we regularly featured First Peoples Assembly messages on our website, in our social media and in our newsletter.



Above: Commissioner Sue-Anne Hunter, Rueben Berg and Duean White with Uncle Charles Pakana at the Rec Vic AGM and Forum 2024.

Below: CEO with Commissioner Travis Lovett on the Walk for Truth.

Truth-telling

Throughout the year Rec Vic worked with the Yoorrook Justice Commission to amplify its messaging and channel it to non-indigenous Victorians.

We provided a platform for Yoorrook at our LRG Forum to address LRGs on how to make a submission to Yoorrook and the resources Yoorrook have available. We also routinely featured Yoorrook updates in our monthly Reconciliation News.

Rec Vic's CEO and staff attended Yoorrook hearings and participated in various stages of the Walk for Truth, including Warrnambool to Framlingham, Footscray to Camp Sovereignty and the Shrine to Parliament House.



Local Government



Resourcing for our work with local government was restricted during 2024–25. Nonetheless Rec Vic continued to coordinate meetings of the Victorian Aboriginal and Local Government Strategic Working Group until it completed its mission.

In October 2024 Rec Vic joined a partnership with the Municipal Association of Victoria (MAV), Victorian Aboriginal News (VAN) and the First Peoples Assembly of Victoria to deliver the **Strengthening Councils Treaty Awareness and Information Pilot Project** which consists of a series of Treaty information webinars across the State featuring First Peoples Assembly members and local Traditional Owners.

The first of these events was **Turning Towards Treaty** held at Boroondara Town Hall in June 2025 (pictured left). As well as helping plan and implement the event, Rec Vic's Co-Chair was a panel member at the event.

Rec Vic initiated a meeting between the Project partners and the Minister for Treaty and First Peoples' Office which assisted in gaining Ministerial support for the Project.

Local Reconciliation Groups

Victoria boasts the most extensive network of LRGs of any state. Rec Vic facilitates and supports this network, promotes the sharing of ideas and resources between groups, holds LRG-specific forums, and communicates information about LRG events. Four new LRGs joined the Victorian network during the reporting period.

Rec Vic ran several events for LRGs during the year including:

> **LRG Statewide Forum, October 2024**

The session focused on the needs of the LRG network, the reconciliation movement post-referendum, and the role of LRGs as Victoria moves forward in Treaty and Truth-telling.

> **LRG Forum, December 2024**

Participants from ten LRGs and one council met in breakout groups to share experiences, learnings and ideas for next steps.

> **LRG Forum – Advocating to Local Government, March 2025** This forum attracted over 30 participants. The major focus was on the need for greater Aboriginal voice to councils and the need to respect Aboriginal contribution.

Rec Vic convened four LRG Working Group meetings. The Group identified key issues for LRGs and helped develop a Model Code for LRGs including guidance on how to engage with local Traditional Owners, as well as reviewing and updating the Guide to Starting a New LRG.

Rec Vic also sought legal advice on a pro-bono basis to assist us extend our current public liability insurance coverage to LRGs.



Top: New LRG – Darebin Solidarity 2024.

Left: Co-Chair and CEO with Gippsland LRG members Marg Lynn, Gayle Margaret and Grania Sheehan.

Below: LRG Forum October 2024.



National Reconciliation Week



Held annually between May 27 and June 3, National Reconciliation Week (NRW) is a time for all Australians to learn about our shared histories, cultures, and achievements, and to explore how each of us can contribute to achieving reconciliation in Australia.

Rec Vic was proud to host the 2025 NRW Breakfast at ANZ Centre Docklands on 27 May 2025, made possible by the generous support of ANZ.

The event was very successful with presenters including the **Hon Natalie Hutchins**, Minister for Treaty and First Peoples, **Belinda Duarte AM**, Reconciliation Australia Board member and CEO of Culture is Life, **Professor Andrew Gunstone**, Co-Chair of Rec Vic and Associate Deputy Vice-Chancellor Reconciliation and Executive Director National Centre for Reconciliation, Truth, and Justice and **Shelley Cable**, Head of First Nations Strategy Australia, ANZ.

With generous backing from Reconciliation Australia, Rec Vic also supported community-led NRW events through our annual Small Grants Program.

We provided funding to 13 schools, organisations and community groups across the state to help bring their NRW initiatives to life.

Left: Belinda Duarte AM at the National Reconciliation Week Breakfast.



Funded events ranged from large-scale, whole-of-community gatherings led by Traditional Owners and Gathering Places (with strong support from local Ally groups), to smaller school-based initiatives driven by First Nations students.

Art exhibitions, film screenings, and community conversations were just some of the ways grant recipients brought people together under this year's NRW theme: **Bridging Now to Next**.

Rec Vic also participated in the NRW Long Lunch as guests of Reconciliation Australia, marched in the Walk to the G and our volunteers attended the Dreamtime at the G match. The CEO also attended the City of Melbourne's NRW Oration.

Reconciliation Action Plans

Rec Vic provided Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) support for several organisations during the year, notably our Moodji Partners.

The CEO attended Reconciliation Australia's RAP Learning Circles and leadership gathering and our Co-Chair the RAP learning circle in May 2025.



NAIDOC Week



**KEEP THE FIRE
BURNING!
BLAK, LOUD
AND PROUD**
7-14 JULY 2024



Left: Artwork for NAIDOC 2024.
Urapun Muy by Deb Belyea.

The 2024 NAIDOC Week theme was *Keep the Fire Burning! Blak, Loud & Proud*.

The theme honours the enduring strength and vitality of First Nations culture – with fire a symbol of connection to Country, to each other, and to the rich tapestry of traditions that define Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

The Rec Vic Board and staff attended NAIDOC week events including the Annual Flag Raising Ceremony, NAIDOC State Reception and NAIDOC Community March (pictured below).

Right: Anna Van Vliet, Professor Andrew Gunstone and Jude Rangi at the Annual Flag Raising Ceremony, July 2024.



January 26

Rec Vic has long been committed to actively supporting organisations and individuals to navigate change and adopt alternative approaches for marking January 26.

You can read our position statement and protocols and suggestions on January 26 on our website.

The Rec Vic team were out in force for the Invasion Day Rally (pictured right) and staffed an information stand at the Share the Spirit Festival that followed the Rally on January 26, 2025.



Partnerships with First Nations

Rec Vic began a partnership with Victorian Aboriginal News during the year.

Initial activity involved our Communications Officer supporting **Uncle Charles** in interviewing **Ngarra Murray** of the First Peoples' Assembly of Victoria and attending Aboriginal Gathering Place Barrbunin Beek for a briefing from the Yoorrook Justice Commission in September.

The Rec Vic CEO met with Kinaway indigenous chamber of commerce to discuss Rec Vic accessing services for corporate members from Kinaway-registered businesses. The discussions were fruitful and Rec Vic is working to formalise the relationship and proceeding to develop our membership program.

The objectives of the program are supporting members in progressing on their reconciliation and RAP journey, promoting respectful and meaningful relationships between First Peoples and non-Indigenous Australians and increasing the pipeline of work to certified indigenous businesses.



Aboriginal Gathering Place Barrbunin Beek

Australian Reconciliation Network



Rec Vic is an active member of the Australian Reconciliation Network (ARN) which comprises state and territory reconciliation organisations and Reconciliation Australia.

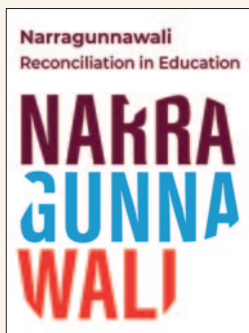
The CEO and Co-Chair attended the Annual ARN Meeting in Perth, WA in March 2025 (pictured left).

The CEO attended online meetings of the ARN throughout the year.

Reconciliation in Education

Rec Vic recognises the key role that education plays in changing community understanding of reconciliation, Truth-telling, and justice for First Peoples. We continued to work with educators across the state, facilitating webinars, delivering speaking engagements, and distributing resources. We broadened our connections across education sectors, ensuring our work responded effectively to educator and student needs.

Due to financial constraints, Rec Vic did not have an Education Officer for part of the reporting period. Nonetheless a great deal of important work was delivered.



Narragunnawali

Rec Vic continued our partnership with Reconciliation Australia to deliver the **Narragunnawali: Reconciliation in Education** program. Rec Vic also participated in the national Narragunnawali Regional Network meetings which helped us build our understanding of the education landscapes across Australia.

We maintained our connection with schools and participated in events run by state, Catholic and independent school sectors.

This included presentations to Catholic Ladies College and Eltham High (pictured below).

Our Education Officer also participated in the G8 Roadshow with Reconciliation Australia team members and met with Department of Education Marrung Leads.



STRIVE Committee

Rec Vic continued to convene the STRIVE (Sharing Truth and Reconciliation in Victorian Education) Committee this year. STRIVE brings together First Nations education experts, peak education bodies, and education reconciliation champions.

A key focus of STRIVE is to reinforce the importance of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander studies in the curriculum and the need to educate staff and the broader school community about cultural safety issues.

Rec Vic recruited a representative of the Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority (VCAA) to STRIVE and worked with VCAA to plan an educator resource on teaching the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cross-curriculum priority.

Reconciliation in Education Webinars and Videos

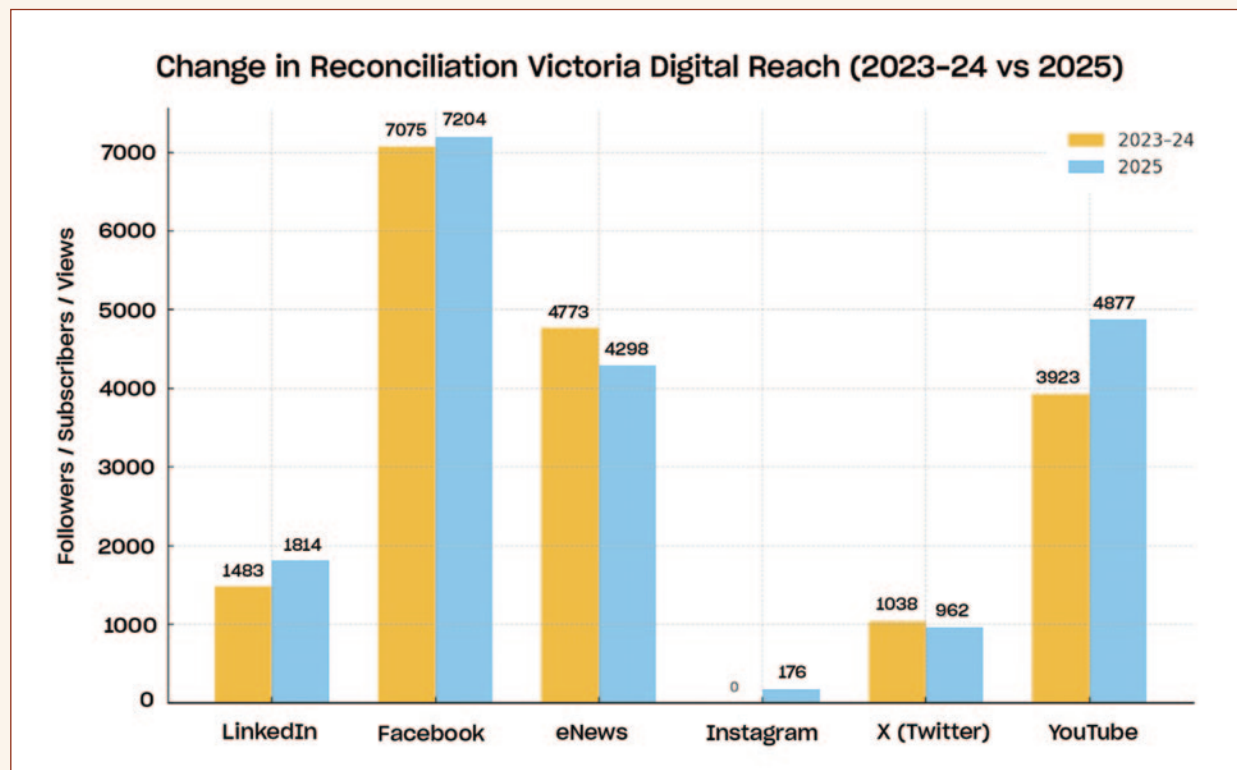
Health and Community Sociologist **Ricki Spencer** supported Rec Vic in a voluntary capacity to plan and deliver a webinar for educators entitled **Empowering Minds, Nourishing Souls: Enhancing Teacher and Student Wellbeing** through Indigenous Wisdom and Practice in April 2025.

A meeting with the VCAA and expert teacher **Alana Ryan** took place in June to plan a series of teacher micro learning videos on teaching the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Cross-curriculum priority.



Health and Community Sociologist Ricki Spencer (top left) delivering webinar with guest Dr Ren Perkins of Griffith University (top right).

Communications and Digital Media



Rec Vic was without a Communications Officer for several months during 2024-25 due to financial constraints. In May 2025 we established an Instagram channel and discontinued our X account.

Acknowledgements

Rec Vic would like to thank the Department of Premier and Cabinet, First Peoples – State Relations, Reconciliation Australia, BHP, ANZ, City of Melbourne, National Centre for Reconciliation, Truth and Justice and St John of God Health Care for their ongoing support.

Our thanks extend also to the Municipal Association of Victoria, Channel 31 and King Wood Mallesons.

We would like to especially thank Uncle Charles Pakana of Victorian Aboriginal News for the wonderful work he does and the invaluable support he provides to Rec Vic.

Our sincere thanks to the Local Reconciliation Groups (LRGs) network of 34+ groups which have done work of critical importance in supporting Treaty, Truth-telling and reconciliation in their local communities. For a list of LRGs, please visit our website.

We extend our appreciation to individuals, organisations, and businesses who have engaged with our work and have sought out our support to ensure they are active contributors to interpersonal and societal changes.

We thank our volunteers for their invaluable support of our projects, campaigns, events and communications.

Farewell and Thank You

In 2024–25, we farewelled members of the Rec Vic family who have supported, guided, and contributed so much to our organisation and to the cause of reconciliation in Victoria.

First Peoples Cultural Council members

Jillian West (until October 2024)

Board members

Emily Poelina-Hunter (until November 2024)

Staff members

Nicole Findlay, Chief Executive Officer (until August 2024)

Anna Van Vliet, Communications Officer (until November 2024)

Jude Rangì, Operations Manager (until March 2025)

Acknowledgement of artwork and artist



The artwork featured in this Annual Report is created by **Graham Gilbert**.

PASSING ON THE KNOWLEDGE

An Elder passing on knowledge to a young hunter gatherer, with the knowledge that is passed down for generations.

With this knowledge that gets passed down it's about how the people live with the land.

Hunting grounds, bush medicine, cultural meeting places, bush tucker and water holes.

This History has been passed from all time.



Graham is a Wiradjuri man with Bunurong connections. He lives on Millowl (Phillip Island) in Victoria and is a self-taught colour-blind artist inspired by the late Clifford Possum Tjapaltjarri.



For more information visit www.reconciliationvic.org.au
Email us at info@reconciliationvic.org.au