



2020 HART Awards acknowledge the top contributors to local reconciliation celebrated at National Reconciliation Week virtual awards ceremony

The Victorian Local Governance Association (VLGA) and Reconciliation Victoria have announced the winners of the seventh annual HART Awards – that recognise community and local government contributions to reconciliation – in a virtual ceremony today.

The HART Awards, supported by Bank Australia and Local Government Victoria, recognise local governments and community organisations that are **Helping Achieve Reconciliation Together** - Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people working together to build relationships, respect and understanding and which demonstrate a commitment to Aboriginal self-determination.

This year's seventeen finalists showcased the diversity and strength of reconciliation activities across the state – including education initiatives, cultural markers, forums, cultural events and resource development.

VLGA President Cr Lambros Tapinos said:

“In a new twist for the HART Awards this year the award ceremony went virtual. It still had the same air of excitement so it proves that you cannot keep a good celebration down. Especially when it is about reconciliation. The Awards showcase how community and local government can work together for reconciliation. Virtually still powerful and a wonderful way to acknowledge the great work that is being done. To see the work that is occurring in Schools and Early Years programs is gratifying. *In this Together*, the theme of this year's National Reconciliation Week, rings true for all of us in these unprecedented times. To the winners, finalists and contributors to HART, congratulations.”

Reconciliation Victoria Co-Chair Michelle Isles said:

“Today has been a celebration of the exciting work being driven by passionate people within our communities to make Victoria a better and more equitable state for everybody who calls it home. They show us what is possible when we all work together towards a stronger, more just and cohesive society. We applaud each of these initiatives for the exciting grassroots change they are creating and hope they inspire others to get involved – because reconciliation is everybody's business.”

The 2020 winners and highly commended award recipients are:

LOCAL GOVERNMENT

WINNER: Mildura Regional City Council and Council's Aboriginal Action Committee who partnered with local Aboriginal community members and organisations to host the Mildura Corroboree as part of the 2019 NAIDOC celebrations

HIGHLY COMMENDED: Ballarat City Council and Koorie Engagement Action Group (KEAG) held regional Victoria's first Survival Day Dawn Service at 5:30 am at Viewpoint, Lake Wendouree.

New Local Government Category: Acknowledgment for Continued Leadership in Reconciliation
City of Port Phillip - We-akon Dilinja

SCHOOLS & EARLY YEARS

WINNER: Balnarring Pre-school Living and Learning with Country pedagogy and practice

HIGHLY COMMENDED: St Leonard's College

COMMUNITY ORGANISATION

WINNER: Lord Somers Camp and Powerhouse - **Be Deadly @ Somers**

HIGHLY COMMENDED: The Victorian Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation (VACCHO) working in collaboration with Ngangkari, Traditional Healers

New Community Category: Acknowledgement of work driving systemic change – St John of God Bendigo

To find out more please visit VLGA and Reconciliation Victoria's websites: www.vlga.org.au or www.reconciliationvic.org.au.

Additional content:

All winners received a prize, with the community organisation winner also awarded \$1000 to support their reconciliation initiatives.

The short-listed and winning initiatives have been profiled in a booklet and promoted online through the VLGA, Reconciliation Victoria, Bank Australia and Local Government Victoria, to provide inspiration to other councils, organisations and communities.

The VLGA and Reconciliation Victoria would like to acknowledge 2020 HART Award sponsors: Bank Australia, Reconciliation Australia and Local Government Victoria.

ENDS:

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