



4 June 2021

2021 HART Awards Winners Acknowledged in a Heartfelt Virtual Celebration

The Victorian Local Governance Association (VLGA), Reconciliation Victoria, and the Minister for Local Government the Hon Shaun Leane MP announced the winners of the eighth annual HART Awards – the awards that recognise community, schools and early years, and local government contributions to reconciliation – in a virtual ceremony today.

The HART Awards, presented with ongoing support by Bank Australia and Local Government Victoria, recognise local governments, community organisations, and schools and early years centres that are **Helping Achieve Reconciliation Together**. The HART Awards highlight Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples and non-Aboriginal people working together to build respect, understanding and relationships which are guided by a commitment to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander self-determination.

This year's eighteen finalists showcased the diversity and strength of reconciliation activities across the state – including education initiatives, cultural markers, forums, online cultural events and more. We would like to acknowledge the perseverance and commitment shown to ensure the successful organisation and delivery of these events, which was no easy feat during 2020's lockdown.

VLGA President Cr Lambros Tapinos said:

“For the second year running we have had to move the Awards online. The difference this year is that the finalists, winners, and friends were online at the same time. The joy in the virtual room was palpable.

The nominees this year had the added difficulty of working during the 2020 lockdown. It is a testament to the importance of their work in reconciliation that crossed many hurdles. You could sense the excitement when Minister Leane and Sheena Watt MP announced the winners. There is something about the HART Awards that brings such joy, and it was true to the theme of this year's National Reconciliation Week: *More than a Word, Reconciliation Takes Action*. That sums up the HART Awards. To the winners, finalists, and contributors to #HART21, congratulations.”

Reconciliation Victoria Co-Chairs Shane Charles and Aislinn Martin said:

“Today has been a celebration of the exciting work being driven by passionate people within our communities who demonstrate a commitment to truth-telling, justice, and self-determination for and with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples. We congratulate all of the nominated initiatives for the grassroots change they are creating, and the collective impact in inspiring others to get involved – because reconciliation takes action and is all of our responsibility.”

The 2021 winners and highly commended award recipients are:

LOCAL GOVERNMENT

WINNER: Glen Eira City Council: 26 January - an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Perspective

Glen Eira City Council is strongly committed to reconciliation and making the municipality a culturally safe place for First Nations Peoples to live, work, and visit. Council established the Koorie Day Out to recognise the significance of January 26 to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples and promote reconciliation, understanding, and respect. Council took the bold step of lowering the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander flags to half-mast to acknowledge the pain of the day and ensure the Koorie Day Out is a culturally safe place.

HIGHLY COMMENDED: Hepburn Shire Council: Peaks, Wetlands and Rivers – truth-telling and reconciling our shared history at contact.

Hepburn Shire Council in partnership with Council's Reconciliation Action Plan Advisory Committee and Jaara Elder Uncle Rick Nelson delivered on Country tours during National Reconciliation Week. Council changed delivery format from a bus tour on Country to four short films made on location under Stage 2 COVID restrictions. The films include a Welcome to Country by Uncle Rick, followed by three significant sites on Dja Dja Wurrung Country.

SCHOOLS & EARLY YEARS

WINNER: Yuille Park P-8 Community College: Nyatne Mok Boriyn (Thankful and Proud)

Nyatne Mok Boriyn (Thankful and Proud in Wadawurrung language) began as an identified need within the community to educate staff, students, and families on how to create a culturally safe environment while embedding Indigenous perspectives into both curriculum and everyday lives. In consultation and collaboration with local Elders, a KESO, Indigenous school community members, BADAC and local government, Nyatne Mok Boriyn guides all areas of learning at Yuille Park.

HIGHLY COMMENDED: Moolap Primary School: Moolap Cultural Immersion Project

The Cultural Immersion Project was a collaborative effort supported by Deakin University, the Department of Education and Training Koorie Education Team, and Wadawurrung Traditional Owners Corporation. A unique video resource was created to assist teachers to bring Wadawurrung culture into classrooms. A collaborative, permanent mural was also created in the space where school assemblies are held, and students were taught about Aboriginal artistic symbology, styles and featured stories, animals, and spirits.

COMMUNITY ORGANISATION

WINNER: Our Songlines Pty Ltd: Our Survival Day Event

Our Songlines is a 100% Aboriginal-owned social enterprise operating on the Mornington Peninsula. In January 2021 they hosted 'Our Survival Day', an all-inclusive, free family event providing First Nations musical performances, culturally safe spaces, and cultural workshops.

HIGHLY COMMENDED: Girraway Ganyi Consultancy Pty Ltd: YouTube Channel

During lockdown, Girraway Ganyi Consultancy envisioned a portal where Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples could share their stories, thoughts, and experiences in a way that would allow Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander narratives to be told by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples. A total of 105 short videos were written, recorded, edited, and uploaded to the Girraway Ganyi Consultancy YouTube to be viewed by all.

Two special community awards: CHAMPIONS OF RECONCILIATION

The Torch: Confined Exhibition

The Torch provides art, cultural, and arts industry support to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander offenders and ex-offenders through its 'Indigenous Arts in Prisons and Community' program. The program is delivered to participants across 15 Victorian prisons and continues to support them on their release and journey back into community.

The Victorian Aboriginal Remembrance Committee: The Victorian Aboriginal Remembrance Service

The Victorian Aboriginal Remembrance Committee (VARC) was born through an act of reconciliation. Together, Sam Halim (of Egyptian heritage) and the late Aunty Dot Peters AM (an Aboriginal Elder and community leader) began what continues today as the Victorian Aboriginal Remembrance Service and VARC. Over the past 15 years, VARC has always had Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal volunteers working together. Hundreds now attend the State services at the Shrine of Remembrance on 31 May each year.

ENDS:

[Finalists Booklet](#)

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 and education winners also awarded \$1,000.00 each 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 the ongoing support for the 2021 HART Awards by Bank Australia and Local Government Victoria.

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