

MEDIA RELEASE



City acknowledges National Reconciliation Week

Friday 21 May 2021

Artwork by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people will be projected onto City Hall and at the Barwon Water forecourt from tonight, as part of the City's recognition of National Reconciliation Week (27 May to 3 June).

The digital projections marked its 2021 return with a launch event at the Barwon Water forecourt, after COVID-19 restrictions last year moved the animated display online.

This year's National Reconciliation Week theme is **More than a word. Reconciliation takes action** and urges the reconciliation movement towards braver and more impactful action.

The projections run each night from 6.00pm to 11.00pm from Friday 21 May to Sunday 6 June to include the significant milestone in the reconciliation journey of National Sorry Day (26 May) and those of National Reconciliation Week starting with the successful 1967 referendum (27 May) and ending with Mabo Day (3 June).

Each artwork featured in the digital projections has been created on Wadawurrung Country and facilitated through the Torch, which provides new pathways to Indigenous offenders and ex-offenders by encouraging the exploration of identity and culture through art.

The projections have been developed in partnership with Barwon Water, Wadawurrung Traditional Owners Aboriginal Corporation, Wathaurong Aboriginal Co-operative, The Torch and Department of Justice and Community Safety.

The City is also recognising National Reconciliation Week in the following ways:

- Aboriginal, Torres Strait Islander and Australian flags will fly together at City Hall for the duration of the week;
- 44 printed banners will be installed across the region as a visual tool to raise awareness of National Reconciliation Week; and
- Hosting the Ngal-ngal-la online exhibition (meaning 'reconciliation' in Wadawurrung language) on the City's website, which features more than 20 artworks by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander artists.

Recognising National Reconciliation Week through a public community event is one of many actions the City is taking to further reconciliation in the community and strengthen relationships between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and the broader community.

Last year Council adopted its first Reflect-Reconciliation Action Plan which outlines the City's commitment to action. Some recent actions by the City include:

- The display of Acknowledgement of Country plaques in all City-owned buildings;
- The renaming of the Karreenga Aboriginal Advisory Committee to the Kilangitj Aboriginal Advisory Committee, which was established in 2017; and
- Consultation with Traditional Owners on the use of Wadawurrung language in naming the new Civic Precinct, which will now be known as Wurriki Nyal meaning 'speak and talk together'.

Council also recently submitted a letter to the Prime Minister of Australia and the Australian Parliament expressing its support of the [Uluru Statement from the Heart](#) and in 2019 the City coordinated Wada-Ngal, a cultural celebration event on Close the Gap Day.

Further information on Reconciliation Week events happening in the region, including Reconciliation in the Park, can be found at www.geelongaustralia.com.au/reconciliationweek.

Quotes attributed to Greater Geelong Mayor Stephanie Asher:

The annual National Reconciliation Week projections serve as an important visual reminder for us all to continue taking meaningful actions towards reconciliation.

Reconciliation is imperative for our whole community and is something we as a Council are committed to being part of.

Since our first Reconciliation Action Plan was adopted, we continue on our journey of reconciliation and commitment as a Council, organisation and community.

Quotes attributed to Cr Jim Mason, Chair, Aboriginal Affairs portfolio:

I'd like to thank all the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander artists for submitting their artwork through the Torch program and to the event partners for helping provide the community with an opportunity to recognise National Reconciliation Week.

I encourage community members to attend a Reconciliation Week event to develop a better and deeper understanding of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and the importance of taking actions towards reconciliation.

Council also reflects on the sad and painful history of the Stolen Generations and recognise moments of resilience, healing and the power of saying sorry.

Quotes attributed to Barwon Water Chair Jo Plummer:

The artwork projected at Barwon Water and at City Hall provides a special backdrop for us all to reflect on reconciliation and what we can do to take more meaningful action.

We're seeing more people speaking up, speaking the truth, asking the hard questions, seeing the hard facts, and informing themselves about issues affecting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in our community.

"More than a word. Reconciliation takes action" asks us to take this awareness and use it as springboard into more substantive, brave action. It's time to call on others to reflect on their own contributions and strive to do more.

Quotes attributed to Paul Davis CEO Wadawurrung Traditional Owners Aboriginal Corporation:

Wadawurrung Traditional Owners Aboriginal Corporation is proud to work with many groups and organisations across Wadawurrung Country that regard Reconciliation as more than a word. Meaningful and proper reconciliation begins with genuinely and respectfully acknowledging the Traditional Owners of the lands we are on, which across the City of Greater Geelong are the Wadawurrung People.

Quotes attributed to Wathaurong Aboriginal Co-operative:

Spokesperson to be confirmed and quote supplied.

Quotes attributed to The Torch:

Spokesperson to be confirmed and quote supplied.

Media inquiries:

Amanda Sherring
5272 4213 | 0466 832 053
ASherring@geelongcity.vic.gov.au