



NILLUMBIK RECONCILIATION GROUP ANNUAL REPORT 2022

OUR VISION

Nillumbik Reconciliation Group honours the traditional owners of the land of Australia. The history of all Australians begins with our First Peoples and we accept the full truth our history. We value our local Wurundjeri Woiwurrung people and their living culture. The expression of Aboriginal voices for positive change and social justice is central to our commitment to reconciliation.

THE COMMITTEE: President: Jan Aitken

Vice President: Bob West

Secretary: Diana Warrell

Treasurer: Bill Pretty

Convenor of the Friends of Moor-rul Grasslands: Jill Kellow

Moor-rul Grasslands Rep. for KGWMP: Jann Darvill

NRG Reps for KGWMP: Hilary Peake, Jan Aitken

Committee members: Adrienne Jones, Cassie May, Cath Moore,

Jonathon Lopez

Councillor assisting: Natalie Duffy

Council Staff member assisting: Lauren Treby

EVENTS:

1. This year we have planned but have had to cancel due to Covid 19 Restrictions. Sorry Day 26 May was initially postponed until July 27 but had to be cancelled. We look forward to a Sorry day event for Primary Schools in 2022.
2. For NAIDOC Diana worked to provide an event called Treaty and Truth Telling in conjunction with St Margaret's Social Justice Group and members of the First People's Assembly of Victoria. Planned for June 18 it had to be cancelled due to lockdown.
3. 26 January 2021: The usual flag raising was held without the presence of a Wurundjeri Elder. Jan gave a short address and Natalie raised the Aboriginal flag. While the issue of Australia Day celebrations remains compromised we feel that there needs to be a reminder of Aboriginal presence in the ceremony so that new citizens realise the significance of First Nations to our history and our identity.
4. Gawa Trail tours have been put on hold this year. While we have had requests for tours it has not been possible to hold them.
5. Eltham North Primary School cultural activities day: This was organized as an aspect of the Pick My Project Landscaping and Cultural programme initiated by Natalie Duffy in 2018 at the Eltham North Adventure Playground. This will be undertaken in 2022.
6. Eltham North Adventure Playground: The development of a Seasons Sign has proceeded this year and is now almost finalized. Bob West and Jan Atken from NRG and the Community Reference Group have worked with Nichole Johnson and Sarah Hammond from Nillumbik Shire Council. The official opening of the Playground will now take place in 2022 and will be organized by NRG and the Shire.

ACTIVITIES

1. Monthly Business Meetings for the committee: These have been held on Zoom in 2021.
2. Website: nrg.org.au. Managed by our webmaster Eric Staff. Posts of current events and historic ones. Info re Resource Kit and books by Mick Woiwod.
3. Facebook: an important resource for information about current events and request for assistance.
4. GAWA TRAIL: Checked and maintained with the assistance of the Narrap Team and Environmental Works at Nillumbik Shire. Open for tours and guided walks for schools and community groups.
5. Moor-rul Reconciliation Grasslands: situated next to the Kangaroo Ground War Memorial Park. Established in recognition of the Wurundjeri use of the grassland on these basalt

hills for hunting kangaroos and small mammals and gathering the tubers of forbs like Yam Daisy, orchids and chocolate lilies.

6. Kangaroo Ground War Memorial Park and the Moor-rul platform. NRG and the Friends of Moor-rul Grassland sit on the Governance committee managing the development of the memorial park. Of particular interest to us are the panels in the platform and the future development of the 'paddock'. Preserving the quiet local use of the area is supported with no particular development of tourist features.
7. Remembrance Day 2021: The Remembrance service at the Kangaroo Ground Tower was held on 7 November 2021. NRG laid a wreath in honour of Aboriginal servicemen and women..
8. Consultation with Wurundjeri Elders, Aunty Julianne Axford and Aunty Gail Smith: NRG is represented at these sessions which are organised by the Shire Council.
9. Mailing list: Bob West has managed this sending communictons received from a wide range of Aboriginal organisations including notifictions of local events.
10. First Nations U3A class. This has been running for three years and will continue. The team of tutors includes Gilian Essex, Jan Mackenzie, Helen Bostok and Jan Aitken. This year we have met on Zoom, using You Tube and SBS on Demand to source Aboriginal voices; class members contribute acknowledgement statements and news items each week; they also prepare presentations on the lives of current Aboriginal leaders. We pick up on issues of current significance and invite visiting speakers where possible.
11. Eltham North Adventure playground: Bob West and Jan Aitken attend consultation meetings with the Shire and the Community Reference Group. The focus this year has been on the Seasons sign and an explanatory sign which accompanies it. We are still in consultation with Aunty Joy Wandin on this sign and the use of the pages from her book Welcome to Country.
12. Enquiries from our website users re issues concerning contact with the Woiwurrung Wurundjeri Corporation, resources for teachers, Woiwurrung language, access to Elders for Smoking and Welcome ceremonies and the planting of native gardens at schools and early learning centres. Most of these enquiries are directed to the Woiwurrung Wurundjeri Corporation.
13. We ae always pleased to partner with Eltham Bookshop when Aboriginal writers are presenting
14. Wurundjeri Resource Kit: This CD is still requested. Bill has managed posting and payments.
15. 26 January: We met and discussed the issue of changing the date and NRG involvement with Australia Day celebrations. We prepared a statement that supported changing the

date and stood with Aboriginal people in acknowledging that 26 January marks the invasion which led to displacement, disempowerment, death, Stolen Generations. We sent this statement to Councillors and Council staff.

16. Bob West has been our representative on the Panton Hill Bushland Reserve committee.

PROJECTS CURRENTLY BEING PLANNED

1. Video: Adrienne Jones, Diana Warrell and Jan Aitken are working on developing a short video which can be used on our website and by schools.
2. Healing Ceremony: This is planned for March/April. It will be held in a park for the community and will be a follow up to 26 January.
3. Sorry Day 2022: We hope to hold Sorry Day in the way we were unable to in 2021. 26 May is Sorry Day. Primary Schools will be invited to bring their school leaders to it and some schools will be asked to contribute a statement, song, poem with an Aboriginal elder officiating.
4. NAIDOC. We will again organize a Treaty and Truth seminar with St Margaret's Do Justice Group .

NRG would not be a presence in Nillumbik without the contributions of our committee members. The support of schools, Eltham bookshop and St Margaret's Anglican church and the wider community make reconciliation a community effort. The assistance and support of the Nillumbik Shire Council Councillors and staff has been essential over the life of the organisation.