

Hornsby Girls High School Reconciliation Action Plan (Reflect)



Plan overview

This plan contains an Acknowledgement of Country, and explanation of reconciliation, our ongoing plan of action to promote Reconciliation at Hornsby and, results of the Reconciliation Action Plan. There are four types of Reconciliation Plans – Reflect, Innovate, Stretch and Elevate). The school has chosen 'Reflect' as a starting point on our journey towards improving Reconciliation. By choosing Reflect the school can audit our understanding of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Cultural Awareness and through reflecting or looking back we can then look forward.

Acknowledgement of Country

We acknowledge the Traditional Owners the Dharruk and Ku-Ring-Gai People of the lands where we work and learn at Hornsby Girls High School and the Traditional Owners of the places in which we live.

We celebrate the First Nations Peoples' unique cultural and spiritual relationship to Country, and their rich contribution to Australia.

We pay respect to Ancestors and Elders past, present and emerging.

The school recognises that by acknowledging our past, we are laying the groundwork for a future that embraces all Australians; a future based on mutual respect and shared responsibility.

Hornsby Girls High School is committed to Reconciliation with First Nations Peoples.

What is Reconciliation?

Karen Mundine, Chief Executive Officer, Reconciliation Australia states that:

Reconciliation is no one single issue or agenda. Based on international research and benchmarking, Reconciliation Australia defines and measures reconciliation through five critical dimensions: race relations; equality and equity; institutional integrity; unity; and historical acceptance. All sections of the community — governments, civil society, the private sector, and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities — have a role to play to progress these dimensions.

<https://education.nsw.gov.au/about-us/strategies-and-reports/our-reconciliation-action-plan/reconciliation-action-plan#Narragunnawali:8>

Race Relations: All Australians understand and value Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and non-Indigenous cultures, rights and experiences, which results in stronger relationships based on trust and respect and that are free of racism.

Goal: Positive two-way relationships built on trust and respect exist between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and non-Indigenous Australians throughout society.

Action: Overcome racism

Equality and Equity: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples participate equally in a range of life opportunities and the unique rights of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples are recognised and upheld.

Goal: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians participate equally and equitably in all areas of life—i.e. we have closed the gaps in life outcomes—and the distinctive individual and collective rights and cultures of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples are universally recognised and respected. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are self-determining.

Action: Renew focus on Closing the Gap

Institutional Integrity: The active support of reconciliation by the nation’s political, business and community structures.

Goal: Our political, business and community institutions actively support all dimensions of reconciliation.

Action: Capitalise on the RAP Program to create a wider range of opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians.

Unity: An Australian society that values and recognises Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and heritage as a proud part of a shared national identity.

Goal: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories, cultures and rights are a valued and recognised part of a shared national identity and, as a result, there is national unity.

Action: Achieve a process to recognise Australia’s First Peoples in our Constitution.

Historical Acceptance: All Australians understand and accept the wrongs of the past and their impact on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. Australia makes amends for past policies and practices ensures these wrongs are never repeated.

Goal: There is widespread acceptance of our nation’s history and agreement that the wrongs of the past will never be repeated— there is truth, justice, healing and historical acceptance.

Action: Acknowledge our past through education and understanding.

Source of definitions: <https://www.reconciliation.org.au/what-is-reconciliation/>

How can we promote reconciliation at Hornsby?

Our core activity is to educate the next generation of leaders and decision makers to ensure Australia continues to move towards fairness, inclusion and equity for all. To achieve this it is important that the school ensures that Aboriginal culture, heritage and perspectives are authentically integrated into the learning of all students. This will be done through the attendance of all staff at Aboriginal Cultural Awareness Training. This will result in students and staff taking leadership roles in promoting Aboriginal Reconciliation.

What practical steps can be taken by students and staff?

1. Each day we raise the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Flags at the front of the school. Our prefects take great pride in this and this gesture demonstrates our students’ understanding that the land the school is situated on originally belonged to the Dharruk and Ku-Ring-Gai Peoples.

2. Each assembly students and staff acknowledge the land on which the assembly is being held with school developed Acknowledgement of Country messages. These were developed by students in consultation with our local Aboriginal Education Officer Mr David Lardner. The school has a bank of these Acknowledgement of Country messages which we have used since 2019.
3. On each assembly we introduce students to Aboriginal language greetings through the prefects. This introduces students to Aboriginal language and specific Aboriginal greetings for the whole school.
4. Cultural Competency Training by Mr David Lardner for HGHS occurred in 2020 where all staff attended a staff meeting. Mr Lardner addressed improving staff Cultural Competency through an understanding of his personal journey as a proud Aboriginal man and his understanding of reconciliation through an understanding of race relations, equality and equity, institutional integrity, unity, and historical acceptance. Cultural Awareness Training will be undertaken by all staff and follow-up or refresher course taken every three years.
5. Making Hornsby Girls High School a welcoming place for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples. Through consultation with Mr David Lardner we changed the entrance foyer area to be more welcoming to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples with Aboriginal Artwork, Prime Minister Kevin Rudd's 2008 Apology to Australia's Indigenous Peoples. (The Apology is also displayed in the school hall and school library). We also display a fact sheet and contact details for the Aboriginal Legal Service and ways to donate to this worthy charity.
6. Since 2019 we have run the Principal's Art Award for NAIDOC Week. Student participants' artwork is displayed in the front corridor of the school (A Block). The winner receives a book prize, their artwork is on permanent display at the entrance to the school and publication in the school newsletter. This award is overseen by the Deputy principal Dr Susan Green and the Head Teacher CAPA Ms Isabella Pozzolungo.
7. One Mufti Day per year raises funds for the Indigenous Literacy Foundation or the Aboriginal Legal Service. This is organised through our student led Social Justice Committee under the supervision of Mrs Stephanie Boden and Ms Amy Thomas (Social Justice Coordinators). Approximately 60 students are members of this committee.
8. Our SWLBeing Leaders (30 Year 10 students) under the direction of the SWLBeing Teacher (Ms Trace Hoang) in 2021 did a unit of work on Reconciliation with all year groups during our SWLBeing Assembly time (Thursdays Week B). Reconciliation – more than just a word, take action where they undertook the Schools Reconciliation Challenge 'Under One Sky, Yesterday, Today and Forever' where each student wrote a message of support on a cardboard hand which were then compiled and are now on permanent display in the Administration Block corridor. As part of the Reconciliation Plan SWLBeing will give this Reconciliation lesson (or similar) each year.
9. Each year the Library recognises NAIDOC week with a display and the promotion of Aboriginal culture. This is organised by our Librarian Ms Heather Cleary.
10. Our achievements towards reconciliation are promoted through our school newsletter The Torch by students and staff and on assemblies by student leaders. For instance, days of significance such as Mabo Day (June 3) will be honoured by a speech from a student regarding the significance of the day at the next assembly. The speech will then be published in our school newsletter.

11. Aboriginal Histories and Cultures are one of the three Cross-Curriculum Priorities for the Australian Curriculum each faculty address this in their lesson content e.g. TAS Indigenous food sources, English Indigenous literature. Every year Head Teachers will complete an audit of teaching and learning and present a 5 minute overview of Aboriginal perspectives used within their faculties at a staff meeting to assist all members of staff with improving understandings of Aboriginal cultures, languages and history.
12. Each year the Principal will report to the community on the school's achievements in promoting Reconciliation at our Annual Awards and Presentation Day (Speech Day) so that all members of the community understand that reconciliation is a priority for our students and staff.

Evaluation process for the implementation of Aboriginal Cultural Awareness as progressed through our Reconciliation Plan.

Guiding Question for Evaluation of the Plan: What has been the impact of Aboriginal Cultural Awareness on student wellbeing?

Data: Cultural Awareness will be evaluated each term at the Strategic Improvement Plan meeting which has members from each faculty. At these meetings student focused data will be monitored to determine the impact of improvements student wellbeing particularly advocacy and belonging. The reports from these meetings will be highlighted at our Executive Meetings. The data will highlight where improvements can be made within student wellbeing. The data will also come from our TTFM surveys. Head Teachers will audit curriculum areas and their finding will be reported to the staff once per year. The Principal will report on our Cultural Awareness improvements once a year at the Annual Speech Day.

Analysis: Data is analysed and triangulated regularly to determine the extent to which the purpose and improvement measures have been achieved. The analysis will be foundational, informing wellbeing decision making by every teacher in an ongoing targeted school focus.

Implications: Rigorous analysis of the data to determine impact will guide both ongoing implementation as well as future school planning to provide continuous improvement, ensuring students grow in their advocacy and wellbeing.

Results of the Hornsby Reconciliation Action Plan (Reflect)

Aboriginal students find school to be engaging, culturally safe places to learn.

Aboriginal students believe they can succeed at school and they do succeed.

Aboriginal students are confident in their heritage, cultures and languages.

Every student at Hornsby will understand the heritage and culture of the Aboriginal Peoples on whose land they live.

Every student at Hornsby will leave the school with an understanding of Aboriginal heritage and culture and history of the interactions between Indigenous and non-Indigenous.

All staff at Hornsby have completed Cultural Awareness Training with refresher courses every three years.

All teachers demonstrate that they understand that all Aboriginal parents and families have high expectations for their children and all teachers work in collaboration with parents/caregivers and communities to ensure Aboriginal students achieve these expectations.