

# On the road to RECONCILIATION

*Fostering the power of positive relationships and mutual respect is at the heart of Westernport Water's journey to reconciliation.*

In its broader sense, reconciliation means coming together. Westernport Water's journey began simply by listening and learning from our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community.

"Our journey to reconciliation has helped individuals learn more about the area's rich histories and develop a greater cultural awareness," Geoff Russell, Westernport Water's Manager of Communications and Engagement, notes.

"We have taken steps towards developing meaningful relationships, spending time engaging with the Registered Aboriginal Party, the Bunurong Land Council Aboriginal Corporation, Traditional Owners and interested local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Community members before committing to any particular approach.

"Cultural awareness training sessions and guided walks were enlightening, and our team have embraced each opportunity to learn more about our community and the world's longest surviving cultures."

By acknowledging the past, the corporation is now moving forward in partnership with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People, on a journey of reconciliation and healing.

"We understand the importance of embedding cultural awareness throughout our organisation and we will continually look for opportunities to develop an inclusive workplace." Westernport Water's Managing Director, Peter Quigley explains. "Our Reflect Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) provides a roadmap for how we will work with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples and create opportunities for increased participation in water and land management.

"We are in a unique position as a government water corporation and natural resource manager to actively work with our communities to acknowledge, respect and protect Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories, cultures and wellbeing.

"Our RAP formalises our commitment to reconciliation and we are now focusing on delivering the specific actions and initiatives."

***"The Bunurong Land Council are proud of our relationship with Westernport Water to achieve dual outcomes to care for our ancestors' lands and waterways, and to support the local community who call the Bass Coast home," said Mr Magennis.***

Bunurong Land Council Cultural Heritage Advisor and Traditional Owner Adam Magennis adds, "Reconciliation and recognition of the First Australians is a significant social and cultural outcome for organisations that work and operate on this country. The Bunurong Land Council are proud of our relationship with Westernport Water to achieve dual outcomes to care for our ancestors' lands and waterways, and to support the local community who call the Bass Coast home".

Today, Westernport Water is not only committed to delivering its RAP but moving forward in partnership with the Phillip Island Nature Parks, Bass Coast Shire Council, Bass Coast South Gippsland Reconciliation Group, Bunurong Land Council Aboriginal Corporation and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Community members to advocate for reconciliation and recognition across the region.

*To get involved with Westernport Water's reconciliation activities please email [communications@westernportwater.com.au](mailto:communications@westernportwater.com.au)  
To read Westernport Water's RAP, visit [westernportwater.com.au](http://westernportwater.com.au)*

Surfboard artwork designed by Steve Ulula Parker, descendant of the Yorta Yorta, Boon Wurrung, Erub Torres Strait Island.

