

Archdiocese Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) 2021-22



WHAT IS A RECONCILIATION ACTION PLAN?



Why does the Archdiocese of Brisbane have a RAP?

Reconciliation, one of the seven sacraments of our faith, provides a foundation to guide us in our journey of reconciliation with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. Like the Sacrament of Reconciliation, it is about the call to repentance after a process of conversion of heart. We can do this by formally undertaking a number of actions (outlined in the RAP) to build on the works of the Church in her relationship with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in our Archdiocese. As a Christian people, we are called to forge the path of healing between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and non-Indigenous Australians.



A Reconciliation Action Plan is a strategic document with practical actions that drive an organisation's contribution to reconciliation both internally and in the communities in which it operates.

Cynthia Rowan, Reconciliation Action Plan Project Manager, Evangelisation Brisbane

Watch the video where Cynthia explains what a Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) action plan is.

[RAP Information.mp4](#)

To access the Reconciliation Action Plan, please click here:

[The Archdiocese of Brisbane Reconciliation Action Plan](#)

Who is this RAP for?

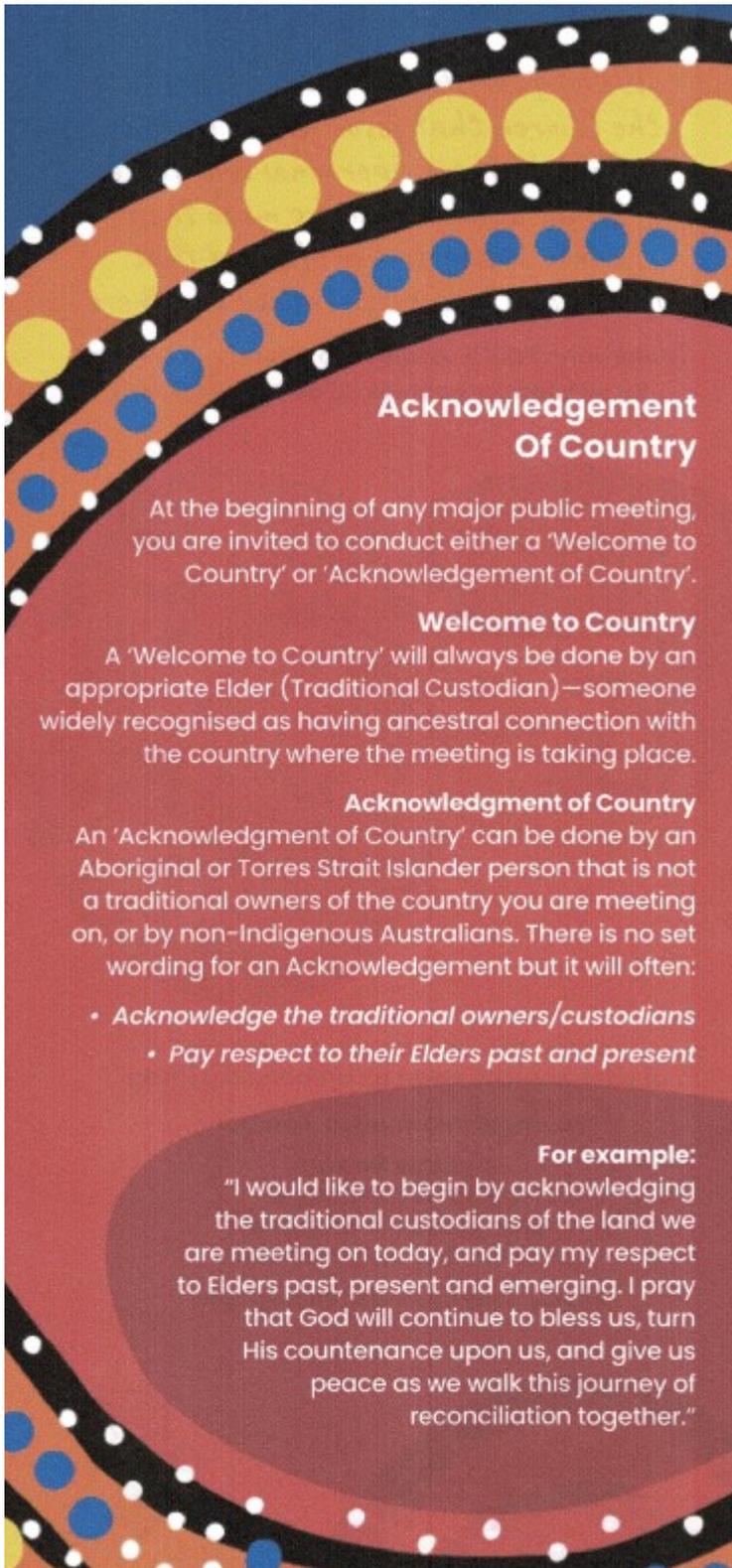
This RAP is for the Archdiocese of Brisbane as a whole – for all of its agencies, parishes and communities.

All are invited to read, absorb and implement the RAP in their own setting. What follows is an example of how you can start implementing the Archdiocese of Brisbane RAP.

St Patrick's Parish Priest, Fr Subin Thomas, is one of two priests who are members of the Aboriginal Reconciliation Reference group. Fr Subin and the Parish Pastoral Council agreed to form a separate group, the St Patrick's Beenleigh RAP group to pilot the RAP.

[NEXT, Acknowledgement of Country](#)

Acknowledgement of Country



Acknowledgement Of Country

At the beginning of any major public meeting, you are invited to conduct either a 'Welcome to Country' or 'Acknowledgement of Country'.

Welcome to Country

A 'Welcome to Country' will always be done by an appropriate Elder (Traditional Custodian)—someone widely recognised as having ancestral connection with the country where the meeting is taking place.

Acknowledgment of Country

An 'Acknowledgment of Country' can be done by an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander person that is not a traditional owners of the country you are meeting on, or by non-Indigenous Australians. There is no set wording for an Acknowledgement but it will often:

- Acknowledge the traditional owners/custodians
- Pay respect to their Elders past and present

For example:

"I would like to begin by acknowledging the traditional custodians of the land we are meeting on today, and pay my respect to Elders past, present and emerging. I pray that God will continue to bless us, turn His countenance upon us, and give us peace as we walk this journey of reconciliation together."



At St Patrick's Parish, Beenleigh, we acknowledge and pay respect to the land and the traditional families of the Yugambeh region of South East Queensland and their Elders past present and emerging. The Yugambeh region includes families that identify as Kombumerri, Mununjali, Wangeriburra and others.

The Yugambeh language groups of people are the traditional custodians of the land located in south-east Queensland and north-east New South Wales, now within the Logan City, Gold Coast, Scenic Rim, and Tweed City regions. Their ancestors all spoke one or more dialects of the Yugambeh Language.

To find out more, please try the links below:

[Yugambeh Museum, Language and Heritage Research Centre](#)



[Yugambeh Regional Aboriginal Corporation Alliance](#)



[Next, The Yugambehnga Gaurema](#)

Yugambehnga Gaurema

The Yugambeh Story

The Yugambeh Aboriginal people live in one of Australia's most scenic and fertile regions – the areas now called the Gold Coast, Logan and the Scenic Rim.

Traditional life was in an environment abundant with seafood and wildlife. The communities trained dingos to help catch kangaroos and wallabies, and dolphins to help them harvest the fish from the sea.



The Yugambeh language area included a number of clans such as the Kombumerri, Mununjali, and Wangerriburra. United by a common language, they were known collectively as the Yugambeh people.

The first Europeans arrived in the 1820s. From this time, Yugambeh people found their survival options were very limited. Some openly opposed the new arrivals. Others hid in the remote areas of their lands or took refuge with the missionaries. The luckiest survived long enough to reach working agreements with local pastoralists and farmers.

All of them fought to stay on their country, as long as possible.



Yugambeh Museum
Language & Heritage
Research Centre

www.yugambeh.com

*ool – boat jeeoomgung – black snake koolumbil – bark
fish kowunday – porpoise kunniah – bind to n'ungum
n'gundaroo – another mee – eye moolaim – crayfish m*

Courtesy of the Yugambeh Museum Language & Heritage Research Centre
Cnr Martens St and Plantation RD Beenleigh 4207

[Next, The First Australians](#)



The First Australians

Our Parish, like other areas of Australia, has been populated by Aboriginal people for an amazingly long time. Aboriginal culture forms one of the world's oldest continuous surviving societies. There is clear archaeological evidence that humans have been present in Australia as far back as 40,000 years and there are scientific finds suggesting that people were using fire to clear land as long as 120,000 years ago.

In the early 1800's the people to the south and east of the Logan River spoke the Yugambeh language. Studies indicate that there were eight family groups within the Yugambeh. Of these, the one which lived closest to our present-day parish was the Gugingin. The junction of the Logan and Albert rivers, now the Beenleigh area was called 'Wobbumarjoo', or 'boggy clay' by the Gugingin people.

In the 1820's the first Europeans, surveyors, timber cutters and missionaries arrived. These early arrivals and Aboriginal people were able to live side by side, but when by the 1850's pastoralists and free settlers started to claim the land life became very difficult for the Yugambeh people. Those who opposed the new arrivals were killed or taken as Aboriginal labour. To survive, Aboriginal people hid in remote areas or took refuge with the missionaries.

Bilin Bilin, leader of his people and ancestor of many of today's Yugambeh, made a treaty with the early missionaries promising to bring the people to church, so long as they were given protection. His tactics worked and many of his descendants live in their traditional country today.

Warri, spouse of George Drumley, survived on her land by working with Lutheran missionaries in the Eagleby and Pimpama area. This allowed her to stay close to her children and in later life she lived with her daughter Jenny Graham.

Emily Jackie was the daughter of Bilin Bilin and Nellie. She married Willie Williams and they took children orphaned by the frontier wars to live in the mountains around Christmas Creek. They deliberately removed themselves from danger, by hiding in the most remote region of their land.

Descendants of these Yugambeh still live in our area and have played a part in our parish life by participating in our celebrations and providing training about Aboriginal culture.

The Yugambeh Museum, Language and Heritage Research Centre is promoting the traditional knowledge of our region. It is open to the public (Wed 10am-2pm) and is well worth a visit for those who are interested in Aboriginal culture, present and past, and want to find out more about it.

An article from St Patrick's Parish 60th Anniversary Book
The source is an exhibition at the Yugambeh Museum in 2015
Courtesy of the Yugambeh Museum Language & Heritage Research Centre
Cnr Martens St and Plantation RD Beenleigh 4207
Compiled by Monica Boucek

Formation of St Patrick's RAP Group



"We long for the day when we are fully the Church that Jesus wants us to be, a Church where Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples make their contribution to her life, and that contribution is joyfully received by others."

(Pope John Paul II, Address to Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander peoples, Alice Springs, 1986)

As part of our fact finding and learning Cynthia pointed us to many useful resources, containing factual and easy to understand information. Some of it was very confronting.

[Reconciliation Australia](#)

[National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Catholic Council](#)

[Share our Pride](#)



In May 2020, Cynthia Rowan from Evangelisation Brisbane approached Fr Subin Thomas and invited St Patrick's to become one of six parishes piloting the Archdiocese Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP). Cynthia and Fr Subin presented the plan to the Parish Pastoral Council, which decided to form a separate group for this purpose. A special working group was formed, St Patrick's Beenleigh RAP group.



The over-arching aim of St Patrick's RAP group is to educate. We will endeavour to broaden our own knowledge, understanding and appreciation of all things Aboriginal and respectfully share these things, where appropriate, with the wider community of St Patrick's parish.

In 1986, when Pope John Paul visited Australia, he pronounced that the Church in Australia would not be the Church it needed to be, until ALL peoples were accepted into it.

The St Patrick's RAP team will take some small steps to work towards this inclusivity by following the steps laid out in the Archdiocese Reconciliation Action Plan:

- We will have an annual NAIDOC Mass with a culturally appropriate atmosphere.*
- At Masses there will be an Acknowledgement of Country.*
- When possible, local Aboriginal persons will provide a Welcome to Country.*
- An appropriately worded wall plaque will be placed on the Church wall.*
- An Aboriginal rock in the Church garden will be relocated and the Rock and the area it is in will be refreshed.*

Vin Russell

St Patrick's celebrates NAIDOC Week 2020



The first event the group organised was a NAIDOC Mass.

On the 4th and 5th of July we celebrated NAIDOC week at St Patrick's. Our church was beautifully decorated with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander artefacts, lovely native floral arrangements and of course our flags. Big thank you to everyone who helped prepare and who helped out during the Masses.

Special thank you to Vin & Prue Russell and to Therese Flynn-Clarke for letting us display the artefacts and for sharing your knowledge. Thank you also to Fr Subin for making it all happen.

Monica Boucek

From The Bugle, Issue 26



NATIONAL RECONCILIATION PRAYER

Creator Spirit,
All creation once declared your glory,
Your laws were honoured and trusted,
Forgive us our neglect as our country approaches
the most critical moment in its history.
Listen to our prayer as we turn to you,
Hear the cry of our land and its people,
Just as you heard the cry of Jesus,
your Son, on the Cross.
Help us to replace our national shame
With true national pride by restoring the
dignity of our First People whose antiquity is unsurpassed.
May our faith and trust in you increase.
Only then will our nation grow strong and be
a worthy place for all who wish to make their home in our land.
Amen.

© Elizabeth Pike, September 1997
Aboriginal Catholic Ministry, Melbourne.

[Celebrating the Launch of the Archdiocese RAP](#)

Celebrating the launch of the Archdiocese RAP

The Archdiocese of Brisbane officially launched its Reconciliation Action Plan, aimed at building strong relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, on the 17th November 2020, with a Mass at St Stephen's Cathedral. All the pilot parishes RAP groups were invited. St Patrick's participated in the entrance procession and in the readings and Fr Subin Thomas was one of the co-concelebrants.

The Mass was preceded by a Welcome to Country followed by a smoking ceremony. After Mass there were refreshments followed by presentations by the Arch Bishop and key leaders in the Reconciliation Reference Group.

Click the link below to view the video:

[Mass for the Launch of the Reconciliation Action Plan](#)



[Celebrating the RAP Launch at St Patrick's](#)

Celebrating the RAP Launch at St Patrick's

As a member of the RAP team I had the privilege of being involved with the Celebrations of the launch, which included singing in the Choir. Our Choir leader Cathy Korzeniewski taught us to sing the Australian National Anthem in Yugambah language, which was such a great and delightful experience. The church was beautifully decorated with Aboriginal Artefacts, paintings and native flowers.

Prior to the RAP launch I was involved in many weekly meetings in the Truelson room, which on several occasions was attended by Cynthia Rowan (RAP Project Manager from the Archdiocese of Brisbane) who helped guide us on our journey towards preparing for the RAP launch. Cynthia spoke at the 7am and 9am Masses and she put together a video of herself speaking about the Plan, which was then played at the 6pm on Saturday night and then again at the 6pm Sunday night. Cynthia spoke beautifully at the two Masses and also on the Video. She explained the importance of us all working and walking together on our journey towards Reconciliation.

I attended Mass at 6pm on Saturday night, where I was delighted to give a brief overview of what the RAP was all about and how St Patrick's is one of the pilot parishes along with five other parishes who will implement the Plan over the next two years. Cynthia will continue to guide and support us throughout our journey.

A cuppa and light refreshments was served after each Mass and it was wonderful to see so many people stay back and meet Cynthia and also have a chat with one another.

Overall the Celebrations and the Launch, was I felt, a great success and I am really looking forward to being part of the RAP team over the next two years as we travel together towards having a better understanding and respect for our First Nation Peoples.

Please don't hesitate to contact the Parish Office if you are interested in joining the RAP team.

Marian Ward



Vin Russell and Pipo Ng planning the hanging of Aboriginal painting.



Cathy taught the Choir to sing the National Anthem in Yugambah language

National Reconciliation Week 2021



During National Reconciliation Week (NRW) Fr Gerry Hefferan from Bracken Ridge co-celebrated a special Mass with Fr Subin Thomas. Cynthia Rowan spoke after communion about the RAP. It was a proud moment in our parish.

After Mass the Acknowledgement of Country plaque was unveiled by Fr Gerry. The evening concluded with a light supper of soup and crusty bread. Click the link to see the [video](#) recorded by Adrian Taylor from the Archdiocese Communications group.



During NRW parishioners were part of a National Acknowledgement of Country. Click the link to see this [VIDEO](#).



The RAP group also accepted an invitation by Murri Ministry to a moving and informative Ecumenical Reconciliation Service at St Joseph's & St Anthony's Catholic Church. This gave us an opportunity to meet people from the other RAP groups and the people from Murri Ministry

NAIDOC 2021

On July 11 Fr Subin celebrated NAIDOC Mass at St Patrick's. It was a beautiful Mass where Father was supported by a choir coming together for the occasion. Cathy brought the singers together and taught us to sing in the Yugambeh language.

The Lilly Pilli shrub, given to St Patricks at the launch of Archdiocese Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) was planted in a ceremony after Mass. Vin Russell spoke about the Lilly Pilli being a significant resource for the Yugambeh people in this area, Pipo planted the shrub and Fr Subin blessed it. Thank you Fr Subin and everybody who helped.



NAIDOC may be only celebrated for a week, but the ideas of "Heal Country" is something that should remain with us lifelong. For millenia the Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders have protected this land with their traditional practices and it's about time we listen and make real changes, especially with the Earth hurting so much from centuries of mistreatment. Our children and our future deserve better.

*Erica Ng Philipps,
From The Bugle, Issue 32*

Yarning circle with Local Community



At the heart of the RAP plan is the building of relationships, opportunities and respect between First Nations people and the wider Australian community.

In our last RAP meeting we were fortunate enough to have a yarning circle with local Aboriginal elders and friends, including Aunty Robyn Williams, Yugambeh elder whose family has been involved in many celebrations at St Patrick's, and Will Davis, CEO of the Beenleigh Housing and Development Company, who was very keen to re-ignite the connection that he and his family have had with our parish in the past.

We discussed our reconciliation rock, what we could do to restore it and how we could achieve this through a combined parish and Aboriginal community working group. The group would be tasked with turning the front corner part of our garden which contains the rock into a beautiful space that can speak to us all of a hope-filled future permeated with love and respect. The details will be discussed and recommended in the working group and then presented to the parish.

Thank you to all parishioners who supported our Movie Night and Garage Sale fundraisers. The donations of items for sale made it a very worthwhile event and the two events together raised nearly \$1300. Thanks also to all those who helped out in any way at our recent working bee. We have a great community!

Cathy Korzeniewski & Monica Boucek, from the Bugle, Issue 30



[The Rock Working Bees](#)

The Rock Working Bees

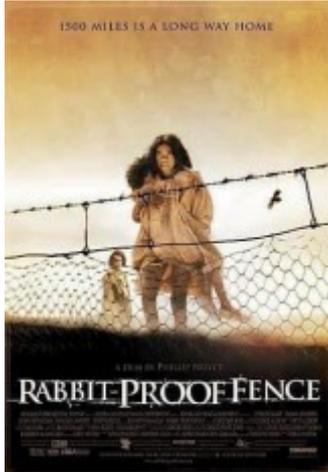
We had a number of working bees where we moved the Reconciliation Rock into the front corner garden, the Reconciliation Garden. The rock is quite large and very heavy.

The plan is to make the garden a beautiful space for reconciliation and meditation. Many parishioners turned out to help and offer advice. Thank you to the people helping to prep the ground and to move the rock into place.

Thank you also to everyone doing such great jobs with the many tasks that needs doing around our church, keeping our place of worship looking great.



Movie Night



To inform and engage parishioners and to raise funds for future activities, such as the Rock and the Garden, the group hosted St Patrick's Movie Night Fundraiser, showing Rabbit Proof Fence.

It is a very inspiring but confronting story of a period of Australia's history told through the eyes of children.

The movie was shown with the encouragement and permission of the copyright owner, Christine Olsen. Thank you Christine.



[The Garage Sale Fundraiser](#)

Garage Sale—Fundraiser



A Garage Sale gave parishioners an opportunity to support the project, while at the same time reduce and downsize.

We advertised in the church and school newsletters, on the Marketplace and on the street corners.

The garage sale was held on a Saturday morning, with perfect weather for it and it was very well supported by parishioners and neighbours. Thank you all.



Trivia Night Fundraiser

Our Trivia/Fun Night gave parishioners and friends a night out at a very reasonable price. A three course meal was served and we were entertained by Bisdak Beenleigh Crew, a very talented group of St Patrick's Parishioners. Thank you guys.

Vin and Pru Russell had prepared Trivia questions about all sorts of general knowledge, including Aboriginal questions. Colleen Clune organised and ran the Cent Auction with great gusto and Cathy ran the games.

The event was held with adherence to Covid-19 restrictions of the day and was greatly enjoyed. Thank you to all participants and to Trinity College and Allison Elcoat and family for great help.



Where from here?