



GEELONG CATS RECONCILIATION ACTION PLAN

MAY 2013 – MAY 2014



OUR VISION FOR RECONCILIATION

Geelong Cats is committed to contributing to Australia's reconciliation journey.

We recognise and value all cultural backgrounds but also understand the special place that Aboriginal people have in the history of our nation and our game.

We know that, through sport, we have a strong voice that can raise awareness and inform our staff, players, fans, sponsors and the wider community about reconciliation and what it means for each of us.



The painting represents "BUNJIL" the Eagle spreading his wings to culturally protect the Aboriginal players and bring together the wider football community as One.

The five shield's represent the Kulin Nations that Bunjil protects.

ARTIST – BJ O'TOOLE

BJ O'Toole is a 17-year-old young Aboriginal man from Wathaurong Country in Geelong, Victoria, Australia.



FOREWORD BY TOM CALMA

As the third AFL club to develop a RAP it gives me great pleasure to officially welcome the Geelong Football Club to our RAP community.

The Cats have always been keen supporters of reconciliation and from their players to their Board and management, the team has always been active in practicing the values of the RAP program – respect, relationships and opportunities.

Each team member, including their Aboriginal players, consistently practices what they stand for by being involved in many community activities that espouse reconciliation. Their Board and management encourage players to visit Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and they work cooperatively with the Aboriginal people in their region. The Club is also passionate about promoting anti-smoking and healthy lifestyle messages through the production of the Geelong Cats *Deadly Choices* videos.

In developing their RAP, the Club has collaborated extensively with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and organisations including Reconciliation Australia. I have had many meaningful discussions with management and Board Directors about the virtues and values of a RAP and some of the ways they might incorporate the RAP program into their general operations.

A large majority of the Club's Aboriginal players have links to my home town of Darwin in the NT – so I've seen first-hand the positive impact the Club has had within these communities. The launch of their first RAP is a fantastic opportunity to continue to build on this great work and create better outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in health, education and economic participation.

The Geelong Cats' leadership in this space is a challenge for other clubs to follow. I look forward to continuing the reconciliation journey with the Clubs' players, management and supporters as we work together to create a fairer future for all Australians.

DR TOM CALMA AO
Reconciliation Australia Co-Chair



MESSAGE FROM GEELONG CATS PRESIDENT & CEO

The Geelong Cats acknowledges that sustained high performance and sound culture cannot be separated. In all our endeavours both on and off-the-field we strive to stay true to our primary purpose which is;

"(we exist) to instill a sense of unity and pride among our cats members and fans by providing a range of inspiring, exciting and entertaining football experiences."

We are also conscious of how we go about our business. It is in our conviction to live and work according to our beliefs and that we build and strengthen our culture. The Geelong Cats' values are the strong beliefs, character traits and working relationships of people within our organisation. They have been generated and vigorously debated within; they represent what we believe to be good and right.

The club values are:

RESPECT – FOR OUR CLUB, PARTNERS, COMMUNITIES & EACH OTHER

PRECISION – IN EVERY ACTION AND ACTIVITY

ADVENTUROUS – IN MIND AND SPIRIT

CONVICTION – IN OUR PURPOSE AND POTENTIAL

UNITY – THROUGH INCLUSION

COMMERCIAL, BUT CONSIDERED

The Geelong Cats RAP journey stemmed from the work the club has done in recent years to establish a Respect for Diversity Policy. This policy seeks to build on current respectful behaviours within the club whilst seeking to improve our culture, understanding, acceptance and appreciation for diverse people, where possible.

As the policy states:

'The Geelong Football Club is a welcoming place where we seek to engage respectfully with people with diverse experiences and backgrounds. We believe that this will deepen our understanding and appreciation of others, motivate us to embrace our differences and make us richer for the experience. As a result our Club will strengthen and grow.'

The Geelong Cats understand the importance and value of diversity in all its forms and therefore, as we seek to appreciate and embrace everyone who wants to be part of the Geelong Cats experience, we are proud to launch the club's Inaugural Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP).

COLIN CARTER
Geelong Cats President

BRIAN COOK
Geelong Cats CEO



RELATIONSHIPS

One of our Club's core values is **UNITY** – through inclusion and we pride ourselves on our relationships with key stakeholders across all departments within our organisation. Our relationships with Aboriginal Australians – our players, our co-workers, our members, our businesses, our community – is central to our success as a Club and core to our commitment through inclusion.

FOCUS AREAS

- Continue to foster relationships within the Cats' internal community of players, staff, directors and volunteers
- Build relationships with the local Aboriginal communities within the 'Home of the Cats' – the Barwon South West region
- Encourage participation of Aboriginal and non Aboriginal members and fans throughout the Club

KEY ACTIVITIES/ACTION	RESPONSIBILITY	MEASURABLE TARGETS	TIMELINE
Regular meeting of RAP working group	CEO/Community Development Manager	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Established by beginning of Football season 2012 • Representative of all levels of the club including playing group • Regular meetings held at least 4/year 	May 2014
Build strong relationships through our partnership with the communities of Gove/Groote Eylandt. The Cats are able to influence football development, educational opportunities and promote healthy lifestyles but importantly the partnership provides cultural learning opportunities for our staff and players, as well as many who are connected to us.	Football/ Community Department	Players/football department staff to attend at least 2 trips each year. Provide opportunities for people from Arnhem Land to have experiences away from their community.	April & October 2013
Promote healthy lifestyle practises within our local Aboriginal communities through the Closing the Gap – Deadly Choices campaign in conjunction with the Closing the Gap Steering Committee for the Barwon South West region of Victoria	Community Department/ Football Dept	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aboriginal players engaged as Ambassadors for the club's <i>Closing the Gap</i> campaign • Players involved in <i>Deadly Choices</i> community education program coordinated by local CTG Steering committee, Barwon South West branch, Dept of Health • Highlight the CTG themes through a special match-day activation 	Feb 2012 Feb-Mar 2013 Round 3 vs Carlton – 13 April 2013
Connect with Geelong Cats fans and members through local Aboriginal communities	Football Dept/ Community dept	Identify local Aboriginal Community groups and invite involvement in the schedule of activities built around the Annual AFL Community Camp	Feb 2013
Raise awareness of Closing the Gap strategies through employee involvement and inclusion	People & Culture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Annual staff events during AFL Indigenous Round • Inclusion of an employee outside the football department on the Gove/ Groote Eylandt community partnership trips • Celebrate significant dates including NAIDOC Week, Reconciliation Week through internal events and the advertisement of local community events to all staff 	In line with AFL Fixture April/ Oct 2013 As per National calendar dates 2013
Communicate and share our RAP commitment journey with Geelong Cats members and provide opportunity for engagement in RAP activities	Commercial Dept/ membership Social Media Manager	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Correspondence to all members to launch the RAP document • Include information about the RAP in the <i>Blue & White</i> membership email and Club's website • Highlight the RAP during the AFL Indigenous Round • Seek feedback from members on the RAP 	June 2013 June 2013 and ongoing Round 9 (May) 2013 June 2013 and ongoing

RESPECT

At the top of our Club values is **RESPECT**: for our Club, partners, communities and each other. Respect is a core value of the Geelong Cats and as a concept is nurtured. Respectful behaviour has a powerful effect on those who are giving respect to others and those on the receiving end. Demonstrating respect to others is our starting point: it's not something that someone has to earn from us.

FOCUS AREAS

- Continue to recognise and acknowledge the past and current roles of Aboriginal players, staff and directors throughout the Club, whilst encouraging new ones
- Use the club's brand and influence to create noticeable recognition of support for Reconciliation in Australia

KEY ACTIVITIES/ACTION	RESPONSIBILITY	MEASURABLE TARGETS	TIMELINE
Provide administrative leadership and assist with Governance advice to the 'Leaders for Tomorrow' program: created by Nathan Djerrkura and Travis Varcoe. The program provides the opportunity for athletes, musicians and artists to share their skills and participate in a festival in Gove (East Arnhem land).	Football Dept Finance	We have assisted by having three staff members sit on the Board of Leaders for Tomorrow program. This is an individual choice by staff.	May 2014
Promote our Respect for Diversity Policy throughout the Club, its members and stakeholders	People & Culture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Relevant information included in employee Inductions • Policy featured on Cats website • Promote through the Nine-Lives Geelong supporter group (as advocates for diversity) • Create a tagline to be used in all advertising for future positions at Geelong Cats 	May 2014
Incorporate a respect and acknowledgement of Aboriginal Country at all match-day activations & relevant events	Commercial Dept Membership Functions Facilities Manager	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Include acknowledgement in MC speeches for match-day • Prepare a TVC for the Big Screen on match-days to be played at the start of all games • Investigate flying the Aboriginal Flag at Simonds Stadium 	Feb 2012 Feb-Mar 2013 Season 2013
Acknowledgement & appropriate recognition of Aboriginal players in the new Players Stand & other Club facilities (ie. football dept honour board)	Community Department through the Honouring the Past Coordinator		
Engagement with past Aboriginal players that have played for the Club	Football Dept Honouring the Past Coordinator	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Invitation for the past players to visit the Club and be hosted by the current Aboriginal players 	May 2014
Deepen our understanding of Closing the Gap and Reconciliation agendas	People & Culture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cultural Awareness training for staff • Opportunities for all employees to engage through culture and community through NAIDOC Week events 	7-14 July 2013
Support and engagement of Aboriginal players' parents and families	People & Culture Football Dept	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Induction for parents into the Club • Invitation to attend special functions that hold cultural significance such as <i>Closing the Gap</i> and RAP launch 	May 2014

OPPORTUNITIES

An AFL club is often in a unique position to 'make things happen' in the community. We can open doors, create networks, lead change initiatives, advocate for progress, and leverage partnerships across industries and agencies. As highly visible members of the community, the Geelong players, coaches and staff understand their unique public role and aspire to make a positive contribution to the community.

FOCUS AREAS

- To create employment pathways for Aboriginal Australians by identifying opportunities through the club and its affiliations for education, training and ultimately, employment
- To continue to promote diversity within the club to build a strong workforce reflective of greater skills and perspective

KEY ACTIVITIES/ACTION	RESPONSIBILITY	MEASURABLE TARGETS	TIMELINE
Cross cultural exchange program by identifying people through the Club's partnership programs that would benefit in an exchange program with the Geelong Cats	People & Culture	Two Aboriginal leaders/Community members to participate in a mentoring exchange with the Leadership Academy Alumni	May 2014
Align Club resources to support RAP initiatives	People & Culture	Submission for external funding for Diversity Partnership Coordinator role	October 2012
Investigate an opportunity for aspiring Aboriginal players with the Barwon South West region to participate in development at Geelong Cats	Football Department	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contact made with local leagues to identify players for 2013 season • Sessions coordinated in training, testing and mentoring with Aboriginal players 	Jan 2013 May 2014
Consider incentives for attendance and rewards for completion of the Local Closing the Gap community education program by young people in the Barwon South West region.	Community Department	To establish a leadership incentive program for up to three young leaders from the regional Deadly Choices program which could include participation in the Gove/ Groote program* and ongoing contact with the community via social media and online tools *subject to funding	May 2014
Investigate opportunities to increase Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander employment opportunities through the existing employment strategy	People & Culture	A review of employment policy with key recommendations made	May 2014
Investigate the feasibility and benefits of supplier diversity for Geelong Cats	People & Culture	A feasibility report prepared and submitted to RAP working group	Oct 2013

TRACKING PROGRESS & REPORTING

KEY ACTIVITIES/ACTION	RESPONSIBILITY	MEASURABLE TARGETS	TIMELINE
Launch		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RAP launched • RAP published on the Geelong Cats and Reconciliation Australia websites • All Board members and staff to be given the RAP • RAP made available to any members/fans/ club stakeholders 	July 2013 March 2013 March 2013 March 2013
Ongoing measurements		Reports to be tabled at quarterly meetings and made available to all staff	March, June, Sept, Dec 2013
Reporting to Geelong Cats Board		Report tabled at Oct Board meeting	October 2013
Reporting to Geelong Cats Stakeholders		Report tabled at AGM	AGM – Dec 2013
Report achievements, challenges and learnings to Reconciliation Australia for inclusion in the Annual Impact Measurement Report		RAP progress is reported each year in the RAP Impact Measurement questionnaire	May 2014



OUR BUSINESS

Geelong Cats is a 153-year-old sporting organisation of the Australian Football League. Geelong Cats employs over 100 staff working in its administration area and 47 players on its list. In 2012 the Club had 40,200 members.

Currently, the club has six Aboriginal players on its list (pictured below) including, Travis Varcoe, Joel Hamling, Steven Motlop Brad Hartman, Allen Christensen and Mathew Stokes. Geelong Cats has a strong belief in it's Club values; **RESPECT** for Club, partners, communities and each other, **PRECISION** in every action and activity, **ADVENTUROUS** in mind and spirit, **CONVICTION** in purpose and potential, **UNITY** through inclusion and **COMMERCIAL BUT CONSIDERED**.

Geelong Cats has a proud history and has recently enjoyed success with three premierships over the past six AFL seasons.



RAP WORKING PARTY

The Geelong Cats RAP was developed by a working group representing all levels of the Club and consisting of:

Community Development Manager (Project Leader)

CEO

President

Vice-President

AFL Player, representing the playing group

General Manager, People & Culture

General Manager, Community Development

General Manager, Commercial Operations

Manager, Hospitality Services

Player Development Manager

Football Operations Coordinator

Accounts Payable (joined in October 2012)

Local Indigenous Network Broker, Victorian State Government (joined October 2012)

Diversity Partnership Coordinator (joined February 2013)



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PLEASE NOTE: Throughout this document, the term Aboriginal is used to refer to both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. Indigenous is retained when it is part of the title of a report, program or quotation.