

# Reconciliation Protocol

2024



City of  
**STONNINGTON**

## Elder Statement / Welcome

‘Wominjeka Wurundjeri Bulluk Yearman Koondii Bik’  
– Welcome to Wurundjeri Country

‘Wominjeka to Bunurong Biik’  
– Welcome to Bunurong Country

<b>Purpose</b>	<b>02</b>
<b>Statement of commitment</b>	<b>03</b>
<b>Council’s vision for reconciliation</b>	<b>03</b>
<b>Acknowledgement Statement</b>	<b>04</b>
Acknowledgement Statement use	05
Personalised Acknowledgement	05
Welcome to Country	05
Smoking Ceremony	05
Order of proceedings	05
<b>Welcome to Country and Smoking Ceremony bookings</b>	<b>06</b>
Registered Aboriginal Party (RAP) contacts	07
Registered Aboriginal Party (RAP) boundaries	08
Overview of key Council sites	09
<b>Reconciliation calendar</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>Respect and cultural protocols around sorry business</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>What are men’s and women’s business?</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>Flags</b>	<b>13</b>
The colours of the Aboriginal flag and the meanings	13
The colours and symbols of the Torres Strait Islander flag	13
<b>Terminologies, what is and isn’t appropriate?</b>	<b>14</b>
What’s the difference between lore and law?	15
<b>How do Aboriginal people self-identify and what are boundary groups?</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>Victorian language map</b>	<b>18</b>

## Purpose

The Reconciliation Protocol aims to enhance staff awareness and equip them with the information and knowledge to advance reconciliation.

## Statement of commitment (RAP 2022-24)

The City of Stonnington acknowledges that the Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung and Bunurong peoples of the East Kulin Nations are the Traditional Custodians of this land who have strived to retain their identity and cultures through more than two hundred years of dispossession and colonisation.

We recognise and accept our responsibility to learn from and promote the intrinsic value of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, heritage and contemporary aspirations to the wider community; understanding that this enriches Australia's heritage and our community.

We acknowledge the right of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to live according to their own values and customs in our diverse community, subject to Australian law. We respect the Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung and Bunurong peoples' special relationship to the land and recognise Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander sacred sites and significant places. We extend that respect to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, and we acknowledge their living connection to Country; a relationship with the land and all living things extending back tens of thousands of years.

Council recognises the valuable contributions to Victoria made by all the people of the East Kulin Nations and all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and will work together towards a future of mutual respect and harmony.

## Council's vision for reconciliation (2022)

Our vision for reconciliation is a united, equitable community where Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' voices, experiences and ideas are heard and respected; and where there is deep understanding of the wrongs of the past and their impact.

In the context of the City of Stonnington, this represents a healthy and cohesive community with equal opportunities to participate in community life and to access services and programs. Ours will be a welcoming, inclusive and supportive city where truth telling strengthens relationships between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and all our other community members.

As a workplace, the City of Stonnington is inclusive, culturally safe, diverse and vibrant. Through our Innovate Reconciliation Action Plan, we will share a mutually beneficial pathway that will lead to a meaningful reconciliation journey with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and Traditional Custodians. We endeavour to demonstrate our commitment to reconciliation and its mutually beneficial outcomes for all people living in and associated with the City of Stonnington.



## Acknowledgement Statement

Council's **Acknowledgement Statement** formally acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of Stonnington and supports Council's commitment to reconciliation.

In February 2022, Council adopted the following Statement:

***We acknowledge we are (meeting) on the Traditional Lands of the Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung and Bunurong peoples of the East Kulin Nations and pay our respect to their Elders past and present.***

***We extend that respect to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. We acknowledge their living connection to Country, relationship with the land and all living things extending back tens of thousands of years.***

The full acknowledgement (as above) should be used in all printed materials.  
Note: The word 'meeting' should be deleted from printed documents.

A modified version should be used at a physical location to acknowledge the correct Traditional Custodians of the land on which the activity is taking place, i.e. to acknowledge either the Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung or Bunurong peoples.

For example, at Malvern Town Hall:

*We acknowledge we are meeting on the Traditional Lands of the Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung people of the East Kulin Nations and pay our respect to their Elders past and present.*

*We extend that respect to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. We acknowledge their living connection to Country, relationship with the land and all living things extending back tens of thousands of years.*

For example, at Windsor Siding:

*We acknowledge we are meeting on the Traditional Lands of the Bunurong people of the East Kulin Nations and pay our respect to their Elders past and present.*

*We extend that respect to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. We acknowledge their living connection to Country, relationship with the land and all living things extending back tens of thousands of years.*

## Acknowledgement Statement use

The Statement is read at the start of all Council meetings, Citizenship Ceremonies, Mayoral and Civic receptions, openings of Council buildings and all official occasions.

The Statement is appended to Council staff emails and is inserted at the beginning of official Council documents such as the Council Plan, Annual Report, Strategies and Plans.

The Statement should also be read at the start of staff meetings, internal events and meetings facilitated by Council officers and attended by external parties.

## Personalised acknowledgement

Note: Anyone can do an acknowledgement.

At informal meetings and events (e.g. staff meetings and internal events), the acknowledgment can be customised or personalised by the presenter. This must be respectful and authentic; and recognise the correct Traditional Custodians, Elders (past and present) and connection to land, water and culture.

## Welcome to Country

A **Welcome to Country** is a ceremony performed by a Traditional Custodian Elder or an Aboriginal person appointed by an Elder to acknowledge and give consent to events taking place on their traditional lands.

Traditional Custodians should be invited to do a Welcome to Country at all formal occasions and at community events.

Consideration should also be given to internal staff events and activities.

## Smoking Ceremony

Aboriginal people have conducted Smoking Ceremonies for thousands of years. The Smoking is usually at the beginning of a ceremony and accompanies a Welcome to Country. It assists in cleansing the area and the people of bad spirits and to promote the protection and wellbeing of visitors.

Contemporary smoking ceremonies involve an Elder or younger community member burning wet leaves in a tarnuk (wooden dish). Guests usually gather around the smoking site and are invited to walk through the smoke for an individual cleansing.

Always wait to be invited, listen and be respectful and do not touch cultural items, unless invited to do so.

## Order of proceedings

If an Elder is present, the Acknowledgement Statement follows the Welcome to Country.

The first speaker (following the Welcome to Country) reads the Acknowledgement Statement.

Subsequent speakers may also give an acknowledgement.





# Welcome to Country and Smoking Ceremony bookings

Welcome to Country and Smoking Ceremonies must be booked in advance through the appropriate Registered Aboriginal Party (RAP) i.e. Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung Aboriginal Heritage Corporation or Bunurong Land Council Aboriginal Corporation, depending on the location of the event.

**Note:**

- at least 28 days notice is required for a Welcome to Country request
- it is not appropriate to request an Elder to do a Welcome to Country on the day of an event. Fees are applicable
- Elders do not wear specific cultural/traditional dress. Do not ask for this at any time
- Elders will bring all the materials they need to perform a ceremony – you do not need to supply anything for a Welcome to Country, or Smoking Ceremony
- a Welcome to Country can take anywhere from 5-15 minutes to complete
- a Welcome to Country with a Smoking Ceremony can take between 5-20 minutes, depending on how many guests are in attendance
- do not ask to modify ceremony times to fit in with your event – ensure you have enough time allocated for the full and proper cultural ceremony to occur before booking.

## Registered Aboriginal Party (RAP) contacts

### Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation

**General enquiries**

- ☎ 9416 2905
- ✉ reception@wurundjeri.com.au
- 🌐 www.wurundjeri.com.au

**Event bookings**

Welcome to Country, Smoking, Yidaki (Didgeridoo)

- ✉ events@wurundjeri.com.au

**Heritage bookings**

- ✉ heritagebookings@wurundjeri.com.au
- ✉ rapofficer@wurundjeri.com.au

**Cultural Consultations unit**

Design, art, signage, interpretation, special projects, naming and language enquiries

- ✉ culturalconsultations@wurundjeri.com.au

**Research unit**

Cultural values and other research enquiries

- ✉ research@wurundjeri.com.au

### Bunurong Land Council Aboriginal Corporation

**General enquiries**

- ☎ 9770 1273
- ✉ admin@bunuronglc.org.au
- 🌐 www.bunuronglc.org

**Event bookings**

- ✉ bookings@bunuronglc.org.au

**Cultural Heritage**

- ✉ submissions@bunuronglc.org.au

**Language and education**

- ✉ language.education@bunuronglc.org.au

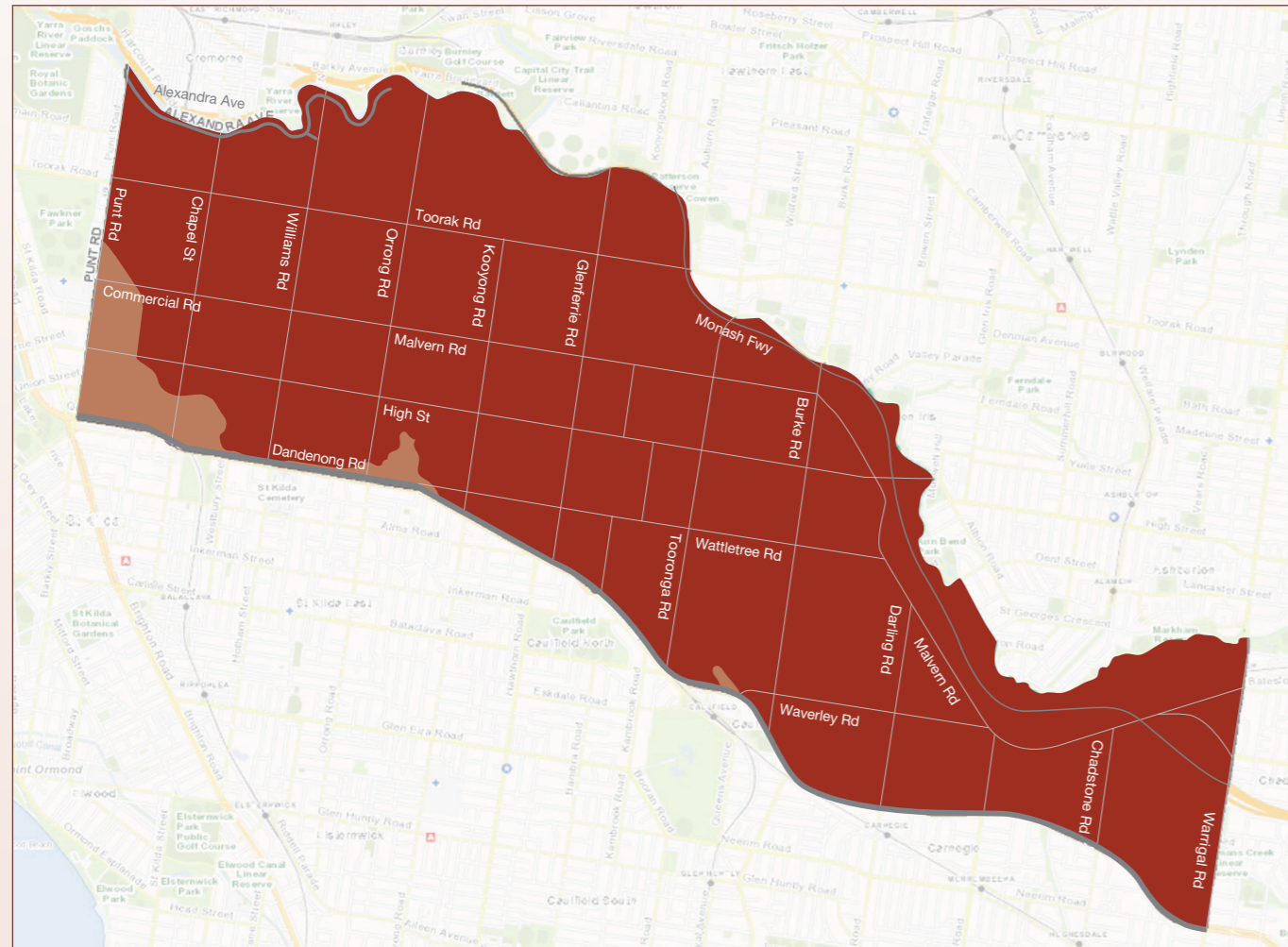
**Partnership and engagement**

- ✉ admin@bunuronglc.org.au

# Registered Aboriginal Party (RAP) boundaries

On 1 July 2021, the **Victorian Aboriginal Heritage Council (VAHC)** appointed the **Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation** and **Bunurong Land Council Aboriginal Corporation** as the Registered Aboriginal Parties for the City of Stonnington, based on historical records.

The determination of Registered Aboriginal Parties across Victoria is made under the *Victorian Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006*. A Registered Aboriginal Party is the primary guardian, keeper and knowledge holder of Aboriginal Cultural Heritage within their designated area.



- Wurundjeri land
- Bunurong land



# Overview of key Council sites

## Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung sites

**Stonnington City Centre**  
311 Glenferrie Road, Malvern

**Malvern Town Hall**  
Corner Glenferrie Road and High Street, Malvern

**Prahran Town Hall**  
Corner of Chapel and Greville Streets, Prahran

**Tooronga Depot**  
Tooronga Road, Malvern East

**Victoria Gardens**  
High Street, Prahran

**Prahran Square**  
Cato Street, Prahran

**Central Park**  
Burke Road, Malvern East

**Malvern Cricket Ground**  
High Street, Malvern

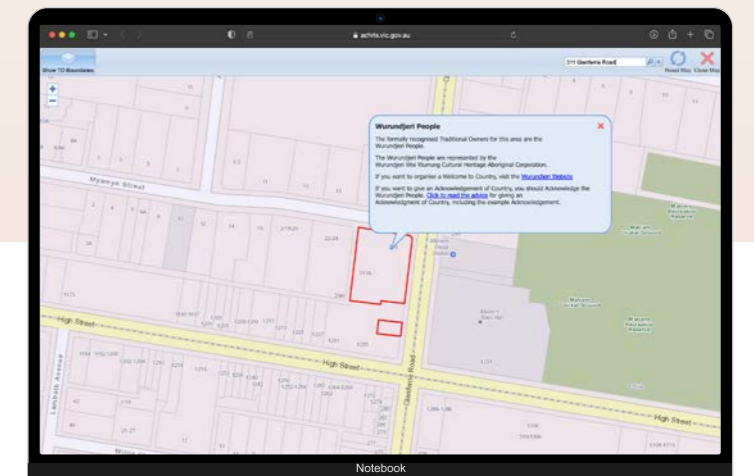
**Prahran Market**  
Commercial Road, Prahran

## Bunurong sites

**Windsor Siding**  
Union Street, Windsor

**Chris Gahan Reserve**  
Hornby Street, Windsor

**Gladstone Gardens**  
Upton Road, Windsor



If you are uncertain of the Traditional Custodians of a particular site visit <https://achris.vic.gov.au/weave/wca.html>

Enter the address in the search bar and click on TO boundary icon.

# Reconciliation calendar

The City of Stonnington acknowledges the following significant dates.



## Healing Ceremony 26 January

Council hosts a Healing Ceremony in partnership with the Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung people on 26 January. The first Healing Ceremony was held at Malvern Cricket Ground in 2022 and is now an annual event.

The ceremony provides an opportunity for the community to learn about what the day means to Traditional Custodians and supports Council's reconciliation journey.



## Anniversary of the apology to the members of the Stolen Generations 13 February

Aboriginal flag flown on Malvern Town Hall northern tower and Torres Strait Islander flag flown at 311 Glenferrie Road.

## Sorry Day 26 May

26 May is National Sorry Day. On this day, we commemorate Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people who were forcibly removed from their families under government policies during the assimilation era (officially 1910-70). Those children stolen from their families have become known as the Stolen Generations.

National Sorry Day is a day to acknowledge the strength of Stolen Generations survivors and reflect on how we can all share in the healing process. The inaugural National Sorry Day was held on 26 May 1998.



*Note - The Aboriginal flag is flown in place of the City of Stonnington flag located on the northern tower of Malvern Town Hall and Torres Strait Islander flag in place of the Stonnington flag located on 311 Glenferrie Road on all dates of significance.*



## National Reconciliation Week 27 May - 3 June

National Reconciliation Week (NRW) is celebrated across Australia each year between 27 May and 3 June. The dates commemorate two significant milestones in the reconciliation journey – the anniversaries of the successful 1967 referendum and the High Court Mabo decision.



## Mabo Day 3 June

Mabo Day is named after Eddie Mabo, the activist who led efforts to reform rights for Indigenous Australians. Mabo Day celebrates their unique connection to the land and the legal claims that led to the Australian parliament passing the *Native Title Act*.

## NAIDOC Week Starts first Sunday in July

NAIDOC Week celebrates the history, culture and achievements of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and stands for **National Aboriginal and Islanders Day Observance Committee**.

NAIDOC Week is celebrated by all Australians and is a great opportunity to learn more about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.

Each year, a theme is chosen to reflect the important issues and events for NAIDOC.



# Respect and cultural protocols around sorry business

Sorry business refers to the mourning process when an Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander person has passed away.

There is no exact timeframe to mourn an individual because every mob (tribe) has their own unique sorry business protocols. Circumstances may also vary depending on the individual that has passed away. For example, if they were a well-known member within the Aboriginal Community, a leader or an Elder, the timeframe might be a lot longer.

This may result in some Aboriginal organisations closing for a period out of respect for the families and the community members who are going through sorry business.

Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander employees may need to take a longer time off work due to family and community commitments. Some may have to travel long distances or fly interstate to provide moral support to the immediate and extended family during these hard times.

Sorry business can also refer to the loss of a sacred site or significant landmark that was part of the mob's cultural ties and spiritual connection. For example, loss of a native title claim, or seizure of significant lands. The devastating impact from such a loss is the same grief felt during sorry business; mourning the loss to pass down sacred traditional knowledge. The songlines, lores and Dreamtime stories that have been passed on for millions of generations are now lost without the land to connect the mob's very existence and identity.

*Note: Cultural and ceremonial leave is available for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff.*

# What are men's and women's business?

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures have certain practices that are performed by men and women separately, and this can be referred to as men's and women's business. These practices have strict regulations, and penalties for breaking these rules can be quite severe.

Each tribe had their own specific protocols around men's and women's business. There were also special areas where only men could go and practise men's business and other areas that only women could go and practise women's business. There were strict consequences attached if a male trespassed on to a woman's significant area and vice versa.

Men's and women's business are still a very big part of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people's everyday lives and cultural practises. For example, an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander woman may prefer to see a doctor of the same gender for maternity care or childbirth.

Bear in mind, it can be highly disrespectful and offensive for a woman of any religious or cultural background to play a didgeridoo in front of another Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander person. The didgeridoo is a men's instrument and has been since its creation tens of thousands of years ago and should be respected as such.

# Flags

## The colours of the Aboriginal flag and the meanings

There are two different elements that describe the Aboriginal flag. One is based internally, while the other externally. Both versions can be cross-referenced depending on the individual's preference.



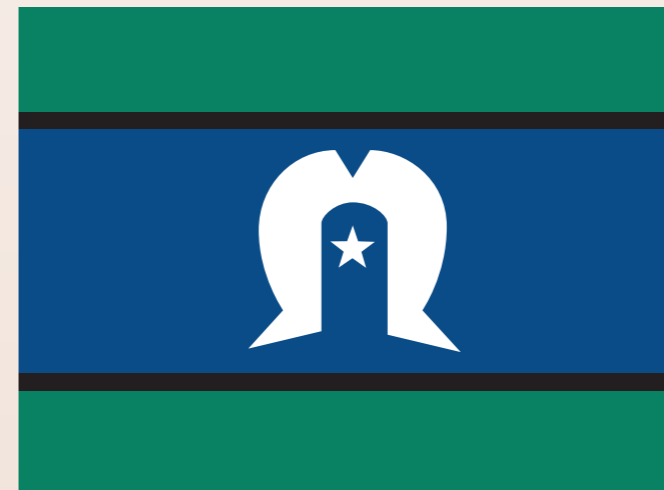
The internal version is a representation of Aboriginal people:

- **red** being the colour of our blood
- **yellow** being the representation of our spirit
- **black** is the colour of our skin.

Then there's the external version of the Aboriginal flag representing the landscape:

- **red** is the colour of our land
- **yellow** is the colour of the sun
- **black** is the colour of the night sky.

## The colours and symbols of the Torres Strait Islander flag



The **green** panels at the top and bottom of the flag represent the land, and the central blue panel represents the sea. The **black** lines dividing the panels represent the Torres Strait Islander people. The centre of the flag shows a white dhari (dancer's headdress) which represents Torres Strait Islander culture.

Underneath the dhari is a white five-pointed star. The star is an important symbol for navigating the sea. The points of the star represent the five island groups in the Torres Strait and the white symbolises peace.





## Terminologies, what is and isn't appropriate?

Be consistent. The preference is to use 'First Nations people', 'Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people(s)', or 'Indigenous Australians'. Choose one and stay consistent, including in data tables and graphs.

Use capital letters, it's a noun – First Nations, Aboriginal Australian, Indigenous Australian, Torres Strait Islander. When referencing to Elders, capitalise the 'E' as it is a title. Capital letters also apply to Native Title, Traditional Custodians and Culture.

Avoid acronyms or shortening words. Always use the full words. Acronyms or shortened versions are considered offensive. The only time you can use an acronym is if it's a part of a recognised organisation name such as AIATSIS.

Use traditional place names where possible. If you are not sure of the traditional place name, visit the Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies (AIATSIS) Map of Indigenous Australia

Terminology can change over time and, where possible, it is best practice to find out what the preferred term is from the respective Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander group or individual you are referring to. For further guidance, please see the [Australian Government Style Manual](#).

### Aboriginal or Aborigine?

The term Aborigine can be offensive to a lot of Aboriginal people because of the negative connotation associated with the past policies and legislations of colonial government. However, a few Elders and community members may continue to use the term in various situations. It is important to remember not all Aboriginal people are the same. Each has unique views, politics, and lived experiences. If you are unsure how they may respond the best thing you can do is ask.

### First Nations or Indigenous?

The term First Nations is relatively new, only being used in the last five or so years as reference to Indigenous Australians. Some Aboriginal people may argue the term Indigenous is dehumanising. However, you may also find some Aboriginal people are opposed to the term First Nations as it can seem like a blanket statement taking away the personal trauma and individual past experiences and placing their culture under the umbrella category of First Nation Canadians and First Nations New Zealanders. It all comes back to asking what the Aboriginal person's first preferences is.

### TSI or Torres Strait Islander?

It is very important to remember 'Torres Strait Islander' must always be capitalised. The term 'Torres Strait Islander' should never be abbreviated, to do so may cause offense.

### Traditional Owners or Custodians?

'Custodian' is a reminder of the ongoing obligation to look after country, and that Aboriginal people don't own the land, but it owns them.

'Owner' is a reminder that Aboriginal land was never formally ceded to anyone and of Australia's history of denying ownership and Aboriginal people's sovereignty over their lands.

Most Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people consider themselves custodians or caretakers of the land.

### Uncle, Aunty, or Mr and Mrs?

Aboriginal people refer to an Elder as 'Aunty' or 'Uncle'. However, it is recommended that non-Aboriginal people check the appropriateness of their use of these terms as referring to an Elder or leader as Aunty or Uncle may not be appropriate for an outsider unless a strong relationship has been established.

## What's the difference between lore and law?

The term 'law' is a British concept that was first introduced to the Aboriginal peoples during the Colonisation period, whereby they were expected to abide by this new justice system. The term 'lore' refers to the customs and stories the Aboriginal peoples learned from the Dreamtime.

Traditional lore provides rules on how to interact with the land, kinship and community. Aboriginal children learned the lore from childhood, by observing customs, ceremonies and song cycles.

# How do Aboriginal people self-identify and what are boundary groups?

The map below attempts to represent the language, social or nations groups, mobs and clans of Aboriginal Australia. It shows only the general locations of larger groupings of people which may include clans, dialects or individual languages in a group.

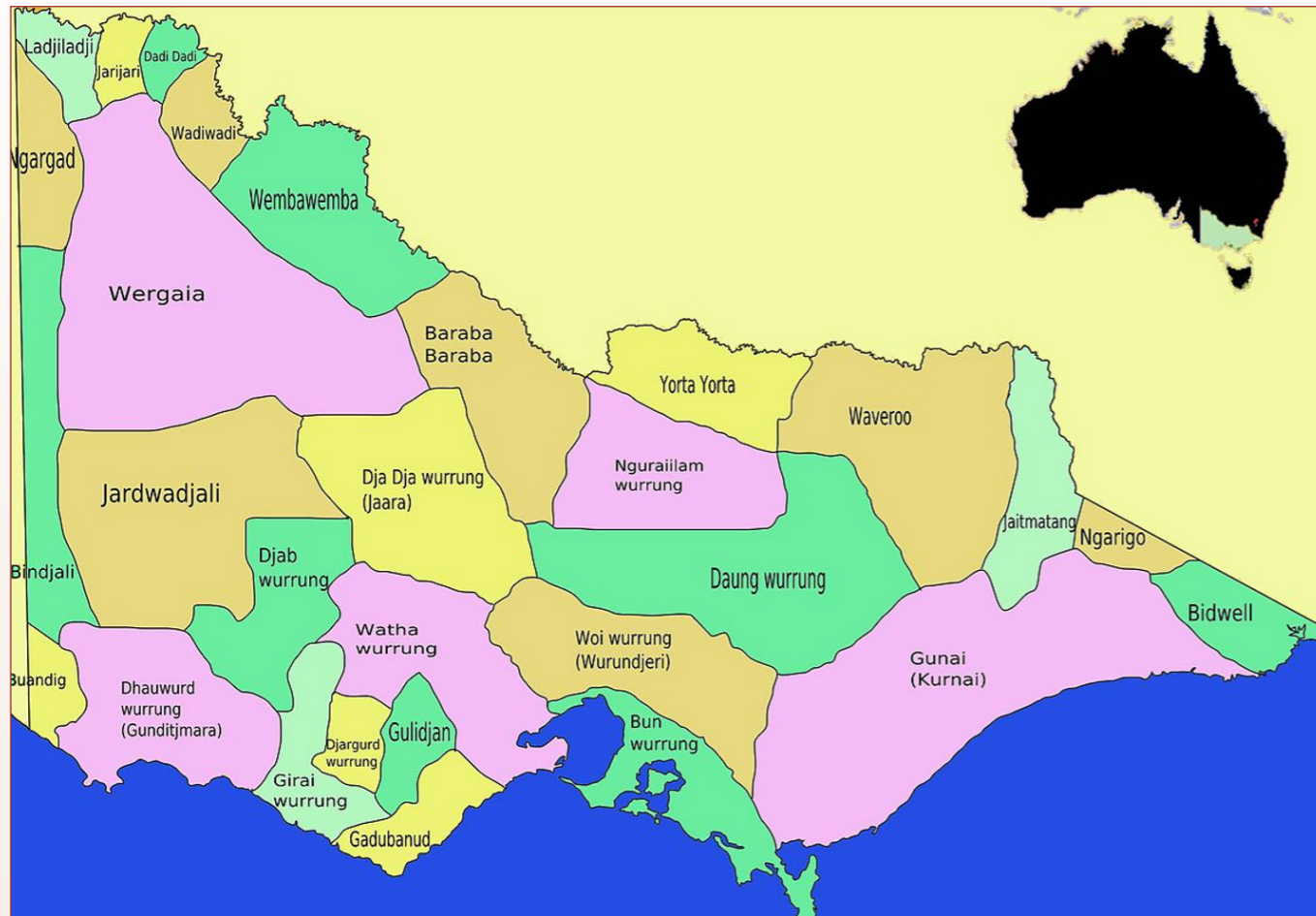


The image below demonstrates the boundaries and groups within the Australian state borders. This is how Aboriginal First Nations peoples self-identify.



*Note: This map does not include the Tribal language and not all groups are mentioned or variations of spelling are reflected.*

# Victorian language map



© 2016 Victorian Aboriginal Corporation for Languages.  
Not suitable for use in Native Title or other land Claims.

## Photographs

To promote mutual respect and understanding, it is advisable to request permission before taking a photograph, film or sound recording.

When making a booking for Welcome to Country and/or Smoking Ceremony or other cultural or training event, indicate whether photography or videography will be undertaken.

Obtain consent from the individual and complete Council's Photography and Image Release form.



City of  
**STONNINGTON**

PO Box 58, Malvern Victoria 3144  
T 8290 1333  
[council@stonnington.vic.gov.au](mailto:council@stonnington.vic.gov.au)

## Service Centres

### **Stonnington City Centre**

8.30am to 5pm, Monday to Friday  
311 Glenferrie Road, Malvern

### **Stonnington Services and Visitor Centre**

8.30am to 5pm, Monday to Friday  
11am to 3pm, Saturday  
Prahran Square, corner Chatham and  
Izett streets, Prahran

**STONNINGTON.VIC.GOV.AU**