



RECONCILIATION ACTION PLAN

2016-2017 ANNUAL REPORT

NORTH MELBOURNE FOOTBALL CLUB

CEO AND CHAIRMAN'S MESSAGE

The North Melbourne Football Club has a proud indigenous history that has been well documented over the past 148 years. In May 2016, our club launched its first ever Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP), a plan that has built further upon and strengthened our efforts to promote reconciliation in our community, as well as inside our own club.

The primary goal of reconciliation is to deepen the understanding of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture and history and strengthen unity and respect amongst Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians with a focus on Relationships, Respect and Opportunities.

Our vision for reconciliation is to create greater awareness about our history and build the capacity of our people to create the most inclusive and welcoming environment for all.

Our commitment to reconciliation allows us to honour the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander men and women who represent the North Melbourne Football Club and pay our respects to the traditional owners of our spiritual home ground in North Melbourne and home ground playing venues in the Docklands and Bellerive.

We understand the importance of belonging – the unique connection between people and a united community. We proudly acknowledge and celebrate our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and heritage and recognise the important role we play in promoting reconciliation to a broader audience.

This report summarises the North Melbourne Football Club's contribution to reconciliation from 2016-2017 under the areas of Relationships, Respect and Opportunities. This report highlights some of the innovative approaches our Club is delivering to:

- Celebrate our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and land to reinforce the importance of belonging;
- Educate our players, staff, members and partners about our proud Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander heritage and culture;
- Create a welcoming, inclusive and nurturing environment that is socially, culturally and spiritually accessible for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities; and
- Strengthen our partnerships with Indigenous networks to bring about positive lasting benefits locally.



Ben Buckley
Chairman



Carl Dilena
Managing Director & CEO



RELATIONSHIPS

LAUNCH OF OUR RECONCILIATION ACTION PLAN

In May 2016, some of the Club's past and present greats including Barry Cable, Jim and Phil Krakouer and Byron Pickett, as well as Lindsay Thomas, Daniel Wells and Jed Anderson came together in celebration of the launch of our RAP.

This was a unique opportunity to bring together Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander players who have represented the North Melbourne Football Club over the past six decades, while also recognising the important work ahead of us to ensure we create the most inclusive and welcoming environment for our people to strengthen their sense of belonging.



AUNTY JOY MURPHY AO, SENIOR ELDER OF THE WURUNDJERI PEOPLE JOINS OUR CLUB

Aunty Joy Murphy, AO, is a senior Wurundjeri Elder of the Kulin nation in Victoria. Aunty Joy has demonstrated outstanding leadership and advocated for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and their rights for over thirty years. Her service to the community was recognised in 2006 when she was made an Officer of the Order of Australia through significant contributions to social justice, land rights, equal opportunity, art and recreation.

She was appointed as the North Melbourne Football Club's Co-Chair of the Reconciliation Action Plan Working Group in 2017 to help create greater awareness about our history and build the capacity of our people to create the most inclusive and welcoming environment for all.



CREATING A SENSE OF BELONGING IN PARTNERSHIP WITH THE AFL PLAYERS ASSOCIATION (AFLPA)

North Melbourne has identified the need for an Indigenous Host family network in Melbourne. We acknowledge that not all communities are the same. With over 300 different language groups throughout Australia we take our responsibility seriously to ensure that all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander players are placed in a safe, cultural and supportive environment. We aim to help players and their families adjust and maximize the opportunity they have within the AFL system.

Each year AFL football clubs recruit new players via the NAB National Drafts. The majority are young men aged between 17 and 19 years of age and often have to relocate to Melbourne from all over Australia. This can create tremendous stress and uncertainty for young recruits who are moving away from family, friends and their community for the first time. To assist and support these young men in their transition, each football club seeks to place them with a host family during their first year at the club.

We have worked with the AFLPA to identify suitable families, conduct information nights and produce information booklets to support players transition from remote parts of Australia to our Club.



INDIGENOUS LIAISON OFFICER APPOINTED

Brad Copeland started in the role of Indigenous Liaison Officer in November 2016. Brad's primary objectives are:

- To provide an Independent indigenous person within the club where a player can seek support from someone who understands, identifies and is identifiable with Indigenous culture
- Ensure a smooth transition for Indigenous players entering and exiting the game. Assessing and helping players to maximise their personal development opportunities during their AFL careers
- Provide guidance to our club on how best to support Indigenous players and their families
- Assist all areas of our club to increase awareness and understanding of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture
- Regular catch ups with Indigenous players to maintain on going and open communications
- Provide guidance to coaches and club staff about how to best support Indigenous players, their families and community members
- Encourage Indigenous players to join the RAP working group
- Provide club personnel with Cultural Awareness Training opportunities.

MAKING THE JOURNEY FOR RECONCILIATION

In partnership with the Koori Heritage Trust, players and staff were educated about Melbourne's Aboriginal and early settlement history along the "River of Mists" (known as Birrarung Marr or the Yarra River).

Our journey began at the Koorie Heritage Trust to understand the importance of land for the Wurundjeri people before visiting a range of Aboriginal art installations. We gained a deeper knowledge from a Kulin perspective about significant landmarks and people that have influenced Australia's history – past and present.

A highlight of the culture walk included entering a traditional Kulin Nations meeting place thousands of years old that has become a significant meeting place for Melbournians and Australians today, the Melbourne Cricket Ground precinct. The significance of this meeting place was highlighted by the protected and cultural heritage sites known as the Scar Trees.



GUARD OF HONOUR TO RECOGNISE TASMANIAN ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER PEOPLE

The first ever Friday night game in Hobart was the perfect chance to profile the Recognise Campaign and acknowledge Tasmania's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. Up to 100 people formed a guard of honour including Elders and young people with players wearing the 'Bloodline' jumper to celebrate our Indigenous heritage, culture and show our support for reconciliation.

To strengthen community awareness and education about the Campaign, information was disseminated to thousands of fans at Bellerive Oval, Hobart in the lead up to the first bounce with the run through banner prominently displaying the Recognise logo, an impactful 'R'.



RESPECT

WELCOME TO OUR SPIRITUAL LAND

Our home games at the Docklands and Bellerive start with our Welcome to Country featuring Elders from Wurundjeri and Palawa respectively. Our players helped design and feature in the Welcome to Country which now forms parts of our game day ritual.

The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island flags permanently hang at our spiritual home ground in Arden Street, North Melbourne alongside the Australian flag. Plaques to acknowledge our first people and land are prominently displayed throughout the Arden Street facilities.



SIR DOUG NICHOLLS ROUND

In the lead up to the annual Sir Doug Nicholls round which recognises and celebrates Indigenous players and culture, a range of initiatives occurred at Arden Street, including;

- The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island flags were prominently displayed on the Arden Street Oval
- Players and staff learnt about the history and impact of the stolen generation on people, families and our communities.

In partnership with the Carlton Football Club we paid our respect to the oldest living culture in the world by working together to celebrate the 2017 Sir Doug Nicholls Round. We have made a commitment to build upon this work for years to come to help reconcile our past to redefine our future, hand in hand – together.

The Hon. Natalie Hutchins Minister for Multicultural Affairs was presented a jumper with #67 to commemorate the 50-year anniversary of 1967 referendum that ensured Indigenous Australians would be counted in the census and allowed the Federal Government to make laws for them.



INDIGENOUS GUERNSEY

Our players designed the 'Bloodline' and 'Tribal' Indigenous Guernseys in partnership with Indigenous artist Sarrita King for the 2016 and 2017 Sir Doug Nicholls rounds.

Permission was granted by Mr Harold Thomas and the Torres Strait Island Regional Council to prominently display the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island flags on the front of our 'Bloodline' and 'Tribal' Indigenous jumper. To the best of our knowledge, this is the first time both flags have been displayed on any elite sporting club jumper. In support of the Recognise campaign, the 'R' logo was worn on our playing uniform.

The 2017 'Tribal' Guernsey was launched by Sarrita King at the Cromwell art gallery with our leadership team and major partners. We acknowledged and celebrated Sarrita's contribution to our Club and admired her incredible talent and passion for Australian landscape.



OPPORTUNITIES

TASSIE TALENT HEADS NORTH

Four of Tasmania's top Indigenous football prospects headed to North Melbourne several times throughout the year to experience life as a AFL listed player.

Tarryn Thomas (16), Tyran Mansell (17), Rhyan Mansell (16) and Leiwyn Jones (15) are Launceston-based Indigenous footballers who form part of the Tasmanian State Academy as well as North Melbourne's Next Generation Academy. They spent time at the Club during pre-season to meet and train with players.

The four boys were hosted by senior players and met with North Melbourne Football Club's host families who help first year players transition to life as an AFL footballer.



SUPPORTING FUTURE TASMANIAN LEADERS

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students from Jordan River Learning Federation Senior School met with North Melbourne players Lindsay Thomas, Jed Anderson, Braydon Preuss and Lachie Hansen during the 2017 Australia Post AFL Community Camp to discuss the importance of confidence, respect and leadership in the community.

Students were paired with the players and delivered a football clinic to grade 3 and 4 students from an adjacent Primary School where their new skills and knowledge were put to good use. The Club has committed 300 complimentary tickets to Hobart home games for students and families from Jordan River Learning Federation Senior School as a reward for students who demonstrate their school values.

INSPIRING BRIGHTER FUTURES AND STRENGTHENING SOCIAL INCLUSION

The Huddle, a charitable not-for-profit established by North Melbourne has a partnership with Mercy College in Victoria to support the education of a number of Indigenous students who attend the College.

Five Indigenous students attend The Huddle on a weekly basis, supported through the Western Australian based Wunan Program, to receive tutoring assistance across a range of subjects. One of these students completed a successful work experience placement with the North Melbourne Football Club which was facilitated by The Huddle partnership.

The Huddle has an ongoing partnership with St Joseph's Flexible Learning Centre, particularly through their Indigenous Liaison Youth Worker Brad Copeland. The Huddle has worked with a number of young Indigenous people referred by Brad and provided employment and job readiness support. This support has included job readiness, resume and interview training and support for job placement opportunities.

JOEYS IN THE KIMBERLEY

The North Melbourne Football Club donated merchandise as incentives to students from the Loom Remote Community School to attend school. Guy Hayward, Principal noted that "our student's numbers increased significantly as did the North Melbourne Football Club's presence within the community"





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FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE CONTACT:

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