

PUFFING BILLY RAILWAY

RECONCILIATION ACTION PLAN 2022-2024



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ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

We acknowledge the Wurundjeri and Bunurong people as the Traditional Custodians of the land on which Puffing Billy Railway operates. We pay our respects to their Elders past, present and emerging.





ABOUT THE ARTIST

Mandy Nicholson is a proud member of the Wurundjeri-willam clan of Melbourne. Mandy is a recognised artist, qualified Archaeologist and leader of the Djirri Dirri Dance Group [which is the Woi wurrung name for Willy Wagtail].

Born in Healesville, Mandy lives in *Narm* [Melbourne] and has been a practising artist for over 25 years. Her style of art reflects the culture of South Eastern Australia. All artworks tell the story of Country, family and her Aboriginal spirituality.

THE STORY BEHIND THE ART – ‘SPIRIT RIVER YARRA’ [MURRUP GALADA BIRRARUNG]


The viewpoint is from Coranderrk, where many of my people would have gazed at the beautiful mountains for generations. The image depicts *Geringdah* [Mount Riddell], an extinct volcano, with its eroded crater from when it exploded thousands of years ago, giving it its distinct shape. The markings on all of the mountains represent traditional carvings.

Another mountain depicted is Mount Donnabuang [*yawing*: meaning mountain]. The Donnabuang brothers feature in the story of how the *Birrarung*: river of mists [Yarra] was formed from the Great Moorool [mass water body] that was locked away in the mountains.

Mo-yarra a Wurundjeri *ngurungaeta* [headman], with his stone axe tried to release the water held in the mountains to give his people more hunting ground, and made it to Western Port, but soon the channel he cut closed up and his Country was again flooded.

Sometime later *Bar-wool*, another *ngurungaeta*, decided to try again. He tried to cut a new channel but was stopped by Baw Baw the mountain and then Donnabuang and his brothers.

He eventually headed to where Warrandyte [meaning to throw] is today and met up with Yan-yan, another Wurundjeri man.



They eventually made it to where Darebin and Merri creeks [*Merri* meaning: stony or rocky] are and cut a narrow channel between them freeing all of the water and flooding Port Phillip Bay [*narm-narm*]. Our Creator Bunjil's presence throughout this time is seen by his reflection in the Moorool.

The two manna gum leaves represent Wurundjeri people's two Creation spirits, Bunjil the wedge-tailed eagle and *Waa* the raven. They are almost transparent in the *baanjamin* [rain] to show they are the Creation Spirits forming part of the environment around them.

We are also named after the manna gum, and the grub that lives within it [*Wurun*: manna gum; *djeri*: the grub].

The tips of the leaves are just touching the water, to symbolise that we are spiritually connected to the Great Moorool.

Another element of the design that shows the continuation of culture is the fact that the tree is flowering and has new seed pods developing. The seeds are our young ones, our *bubups* [babies and children], while the flowers are the young adults who are demonstrating their cultural leadership in many forms.

To symbolise the cultural revival of this generation is the *ngawanj* [sun] rising from the *galem-barriam* [east]. Your *murrup* [spirit] climbs the *karralk* [sun rays] at night, your spirit returns to you in the morning when the sun rises.

Finally, to depict the land renewing itself, *baanjimin* [rain] is shown both falling from the *wurru wurru* [sky] and soaking into the *biik* [land]. No matter what happens around you, *Baban Biik* [Mother Earth] will always be, it will always cleanse itself, and we will always look after it.



Image: Dean Gifford

ABOUT PUFFING BILLY RAILWAY

FROM THE CEO

The development of this Reconciliation Action Plan [RAP] is a significant milestone for Puffing Billy Railway.

Our RAP is a strategic document that reflects our organisational commitment to reconciliation. However, it is much more than just a document. The process for developing the RAP has involved management, staff and volunteers of Puffing Billy Railway deepening our understanding of the Aboriginal cultural heritage of the region. It has also been a way to have meaningful dialogue with the Traditional Custodians and to start building a collaborative working relationship into the future.

As an organisation that demonstrates good governance, I consider it important that Puffing Billy Railway is a learning organisation that evolves and grows. A key area of learning for us relates to how we can best incorporate the principles of reconciliation into our everyday business practices.

I appreciate that along the way there will be challenges as to how we achieve the outcomes of this RAP, however, we would not be learning and growing as an organisation if we did not experience some challenges. They should be viewed as a positive sign that we are stretching ourselves and heading in the right direction as we work towards achieving our reconciliation commitments.

On behalf of the Board of Puffing Billy Railway, I would like to sincerely thank all those who participated in the process of developing this RAP. Without your participation, this step forward into reconciliation would not be possible.

Looking ahead, I see such an exciting time as we collectively work together to explore the opportunities that will be created.

PETER ABBOTT
Chief Executive Officer

INTRODUCTION

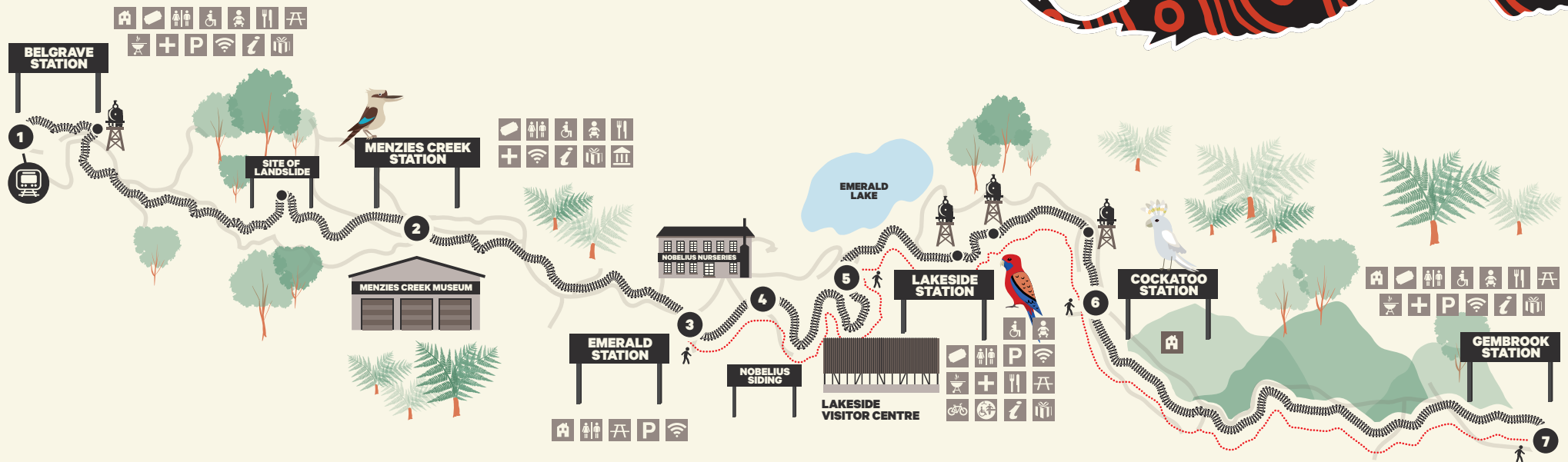
This is the first RAP for Puffing Billy Railway. Under the banner of Reconciliation Australia, it is known as a 'Reflect' type of RAP. As such, its purpose is to lay the foundations for reconciliation within the organisation and set out the actions required to prepare the organisation for future RAP's.

It is our beginning in terms of reconciliation. Our first steps towards building strong working relationships with Traditional Custodians.

We will learn from the experience of other organisations that are at different stages of their reconciliation journey, as well as sharing our own experience.

A number of projects have been identified under the key areas of Relationships, Respect and Opportunities. The RAP contains 14 actions, against which we will measure our performance.

Below is a map of Puffing Billy Railway's route, weaving through the traditional lands of both the Wurundjeri and Bunurong people.



WHO WE ARE

PUFFING BILLY IS AUSTRALIA'S FOREMOST OPERATING STEAM RAILWAY AND ONE OF THE LARGEST HERITAGE RAILWAYS IN THE WORLD.

THIS CHAPTER OF AUSTRALIA'S HISTORY WILL BE PRESERVED AND SHARED.

Puffing Billy Railway is an icon for Victoria, having transported visitors through the magnificent Dandenong Ranges for over 120 years.

The Emerald Tourist Railway Board is a Statutory Authority responsible for the management and operation of Puffing Billy Railway, supported by a separate entity in the Puffing Billy Preservation Society.

Indeed, the story of Puffing Billy Railway is one of community spirit. It is only through the dedicated efforts of volunteers and staff that the railway has survived and grown, with over 13 million passengers now been carried.

Puffing Billy Railway lives off the passion and commitment of its volunteers. They assist staff by performing a range of services from administration, events, to station masters, engine cleaners and drivers.

The mission of Puffing Billy Railway is to provide a unique opportunity for visitors to immerse themselves in our rich history, environment and communities. The organisation aims to preserve and share Puffing Billy Railway for generations to come.

An important part of our organisational values is Good Governance. This RAP provides the basis for appropriate recognition of our Traditional Custodians.



Image: Kahla Webb

OUR RECONCILIATION ACTION PLAN

HOW WE DEVELOPED THIS RAP

Despite the limitations that COVID-19 placed upon the organisation and our operating environment, the process for developing this RAP has been extremely rewarding for Puffing Billy Railway.

The Reconciliation Australia framework provided the context for developing a 'Reflect' RAP, which has a strong 'inwards' focus for the organisation, helping us to do the internal planning required for a successful step into reconciliation. The framework also paints the picture of what lays ahead in subsequent RAP's that we will develop.

At the same time, we were interested in looking externally and learning from the experience of other organisations that have travelled further along the reconciliation path. In particular, a review was undertaken of the RAP's developed by Phillip Island Nature Parks, an organisation that is advanced in this space and importantly have established a meaningful working relationship with the Bunurong Land Council as well as the local Aboriginal community.

Key learnings from this review included:

- Reconciliation takes time. Appropriate time and opportunity need to be given for a good relationship building process. This means not only taking the time to listen to everyone's views but also working to flexible timelines.
- Agencies need to adopt culturally appropriate and effective ways of engagement. Often informal types of engagement are more effective, including hosting meetings on Country.
- Ensure that agencies consult broadly and be all inclusive in their discussions with Aboriginal people. To help ensure that this engagement is undertaken in an appropriate manner, Phillip Island Nature Parks developed a 'Policy for Engagement and Working Together Protocols'. These protocols outlined clearly what matters were essential to go before Traditional Custodians for their consideration and approval.
- Agencies need RAP champions. There needs to be people within an organisation that drive the internal reconciliation processes. The principles of reconciliation need to be embedded into everything an organisation does. For Phillip Island Nature Parks, this meant senior management representatives taking the time to attend all team meetings and talk about what the RAP actions mean for their particular team.

Incorporated into our RAP development process was a cultural awareness session. This acted as a platform for management, staff and volunteers to expand our understanding of Aboriginal cultural heritage and the many challenges Aboriginal people continue to face within today's society. The session flowed into a workshop that stimulated us to explore ideas and express the commitments toward reconciliation which we aspire to.

Consultation is being undertaken with both Traditional Owner groups, seeking their input to the RAP and commencing building the relationship with them.

GROWING RELATIONSHIPS :

Building enduring relationships between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and Puffing Billy Railway.

Meaningful cultural relationships underpin reconciliation. Puffing Billy Railway will grow collaborative working relationships with Traditional Custodians that are mutually beneficial. These relationships will enable knowledge sharing and inform our future management programs.

ACTION	DELIVERABLE	TIMELINE	RESPONSIBILITY
1. Establish and strengthen mutually beneficial relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and organisations.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and organisations within our region or sphere of influence. <i>Comments: Liaise with organisations such as Reconciliation Victoria, Koori Heritage Trust, Koori Youth Council, Visit Victoria, Local Aboriginal Networks, and Traditional owners.</i> Research best practice and principles that support partnerships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and organisations. <i>Comments: Liaise with other tourism organisations and Reconciliation Victoria.</i> 	December 2022	RAP Working Group
2. Build relationships through celebrating National Reconciliation Week [NRW].	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Circulate Reconciliation Australia's NRW resources and reconciliation materials to Puffing Billy Railway staff and volunteers. <i>Comments: Utilise staff intranet, social media and monthly updates to promote NRW.</i> RAP working group members to participate in an external NRW event. <i>Comments: Offer PBR facilities to host NRW events and invite Traditional Owners.</i> Encourage and support staff and senior leaders to participate in at least one external event to recognise and celebrate NRW. 	27 May – 3 June 2023 May – June 2023 May – June 2023	RAP Working Group
3. Promote reconciliation through our sphere of influence.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Communicate our commitment to reconciliation to all Puffing Billy Railway staff and volunteers, and the local community. <i>Comments: Develop a RAP stakeholder engagement strategy and communications protocols.</i> Identify external stakeholders that our organisation can engage with on our reconciliation journey. <i>Comments: Incorporated in above strategy.</i> Identify RAP and other like-minded organisations that we could approach to collaborate with on our reconciliation journey. 	February 2023 February 2023 February 2023	RAP Working Group



Image: Kahla Webb

ACTION	DELIVERABLE	TIMELINE	RESPONSIBILITY
4. Research positive race relations through anti-discrimination strategies.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Research best practice and policies in areas of race relations and anti-discrimination. <i>Comments: Include a focus on youth engagement and organisational training.</i>	February 2023	RAP Working Group
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Conduct a review of organisational policies and procedures to identify existing anti-discrimination provisions and future needs. <i>Comments: Ensure integration with the Gender Equity Plan and Future Disability Plan in PBR's current policy review.</i>	February 2023	

Demonstrating respect for Australia's First Peoples.

Our cultural relationships need to be based upon respect. Puffing Billy Railway will demonstrate respect for the culture and heritage of Traditional Custodians throughout our daily activities and interactions.

ACTION	DELIVERABLE	TIMELINE	RESPONSIBILITY
5. Increase understanding, value and recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, histories, knowledge and rights through cultural learning.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop a business case for increasing understanding, value and recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, histories and rights within Puffing Billy Railway. <i>Comments: PBR interpretation and education services to be broadened to encompass the history of the railway and First Nations people. Research the history of the land we are on and educate our organisation on this story; this includes the technical achievements of Aboriginal people and linking with PBR engineering achievements.</i> Conduct a review of cultural learning needs within our organisation. <i>Comments: Undertake staff surveys to assess current level of cultural awareness.</i> 	<p>April 2023</p> <p>May 2023</p>	RAP Working Group
6. Demonstrate respect to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples by observing cultural protocols.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop an understanding of the local Traditional Custodians of the lands within our organisation's operational area. <i>Comments: Engage with Traditional Owners and form a working group with local Councils.</i> Increase staff's understanding of the purpose and significance behind cultural protocols, including Acknowledgement of Country and Welcome to Country protocols. <i>Comments: Incorporate an Acknowledgement of Country in staff / volunteer meetings and Board meetings. Train staff / volunteers about use of these cultural protocols. Investigate the potential for incorporating Aboriginal names into railway station signage.</i> 	2023-2024	RAP Working Group
7. Build respect for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and histories by celebrating NAIDOC Week.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Raise awareness and share information amongst our staff and volunteers about the meaning of NAIDOC Week. <i>Comments: Undertake staff / volunteer events to celebrate NAIDOC Week.</i> Introduce our staff and volunteers to NAIDOC Week by promoting external events in our local area. <i>Comments: Activate the Lakeside Visitor Centre with NAIDOC activities in collaboration with Aboriginal organisations.</i> RAP working group to participate in an external NAIDOC Week event. 	<p>July 2023</p> <p>July 2023</p> <p>July 2023</p>	RAP Working Group



Image: Dean Gifford

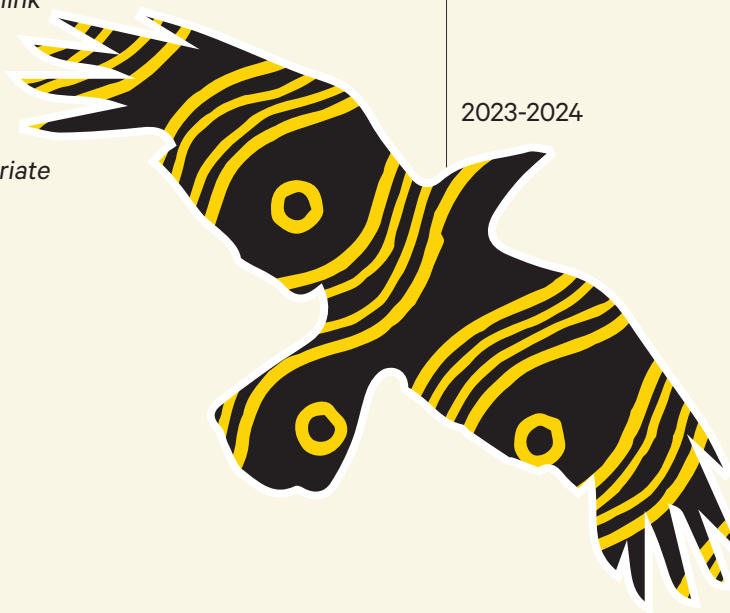
ACTION	DELIVERABLE	TIMELINE	RESPONSIBILITY
8. Ensure Child Safe Standards are implemented for Aboriginal children.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Support Aboriginal children and young people to express their culture.• Ensure all staff and volunteers receive relevant training so they have an understanding of Aboriginal culture and an appreciation for culturally sensitive issues.• Identify and address incidences of racism with the involvement of Aboriginal children, young people and their families.• Ensure the organisation's policies, procedures, systems, processes and measures create a culturally safe and inclusive environment for Aboriginal children and young people.	April 2023	RAP Working Group

OPPORTUNITIES:

Creating opportunities together.

Puffing Billy Railway is privileged to offer a heritage railway experience within the significant environmental and cultural landscape of the Dandenong Ranges. We will work together with Traditional Custodians and the local Aboriginal community to create opportunities that generate social and economic benefits for all.

ACTION	DELIVERABLE	TIMELINE	RESPONSIBILITY
9. Improve employment outcomes by increasing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander recruitment, retention and professional development.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop a business case for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment within Puffing Billy Railway. <i>Comments: Undertake an organisational internal assessment and introduce a cultural awareness induction for all recruitment. Review recruitment procedures and introduce mentoring. Identify opportunities for Indigenous events, visitor experiences and involvement in land management. Liaise with Traditional Custodians and local Aboriginal community groups in relation to training opportunities.</i> 	2023-2024	RAP Working Group
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Build understanding of current Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staffing to inform future employment and professional development opportunities. <i>Comments: Undertake a staff survey to review what has been done recently in terms of professional development and recruitment.</i> 	2023-2024	
10. Increase Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander supplier diversity to support improved economic and social outcomes.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop a business case for procurement from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander owned businesses. <i>Comments: Build an understanding of what is available and link to the wider visitor experience. Examine commercial opportunities in retail, food and beverage.</i> 	2023-2024	RAP Working Group
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Investigate Supply Nation membership. <i>Comments: Develop a tender evaluation matrix with appropriate weighting for Indigenous businesses.</i> 	2023-2024	



GOVERNANCE :

Keeping track of progress and reporting.

Monitoring the status of this RAP provides an indication of how well we are achieving our reconciliation aspirations. Puffing Billy Railway will track the progress of our RAP deliverables and report on their status to all stakeholders.

ACTION	DELIVERABLE	TIMELINE	RESPONSIBILITY
11. Establish and maintain an effective RAP working group to drive governance of the RAP.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Form a RAP working group to govern RAP implementation. <i>Comments: Working group to include motivated staff / volunteers from across the organisation that can champion the RAP. Also have Board involvement.</i>• Draft a Terms of Reference for the RAP working group. <i>Comments: Source examples from other organisations.</i>• Establish Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander representation on the RAP working group. <i>Comments: Approach the Bunurong Land Council and the Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation to sit on the working group.</i>	October 2022 October 2022 2023-2024	RAP Working Group
12. Provide appropriate support for effective implementation of RAP commitments.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Define resource needs for RAP implementation. <i>Comments: Build the RAP actions into the Corporate Plan and budget.</i>• Engage senior leaders in the delivery of RAP commitments. <i>Comments: RAP working group to present updates to the Board and Management Executive Group.</i>• Define appropriate systems and capability to track, measure and report on RAP commitments. <i>Comments: The Culture and Governance Sub-committee to have a KPI for quarterly reporting on RAP implementation.</i>	April 2023 April 2023 April 2023	RAP Working Group
13. Build accountability and transparency through reporting RAP achievements, challenges and learnings both internally and externally.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Complete and submit the annual RAP Impact Measurement Questionnaire to Reconciliation Australia. <i>Comments: Add to the Board KPI's.</i>	September 2023	RAP Working Group
14. Continue our reconciliation journey by developing our next RAP.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Register via Reconciliation Australia's website to begin developing our next RAP. <i>Comments: Plan for next RAP as part of annual review of this 'Reflect RAP'.</i>	June 2023	RAP Working Group







Image: Michael Greenhill



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