



# FIRE Carriers

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## COVENANT 2022



Covenants emphasise the ethos and faith belief of Catholic schools and the Social Justice response they are committed to make as part of their Christian identity. Schools' expressed commitment is reflected in practical goals and actions which they strive to achieve moving forward.

School covenants express in ways, specific to each school, recognition of the special contribution Aboriginal peoples and their cultures make to Australian society, their relationship and connection to the land, and their present position of disadvantage and social exclusion. They declare the school and school community's commitment to stand in solidarity with Aboriginal peoples to achieve true reconciliation and acknowledgement, by all Australians, of their rightful position within Australian society.

Catherine McAuley College recognises the special place and culture of Aboriginal peoples within Australia and acknowledges that Aboriginal peoples have been the caretakers of this Land for more than 60,000 years. We respect their spiritual connection to Mother Earth through the Dreaming. We understand that practical measures need to address

the disadvantage experienced by Aboriginal people in education, health, employment, and general opportunity.

*"An apology begins the healing process. Apology means understanding, a willingness to enter into the suffering. It implies a commitment to do more."*

The late Sir Ronald Wilson, Chair of the National Inquiry into the removal of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children from their families.

*"Reconciliation is an active pursuit – it's about getting on with what's needed and what we know to get the results we all want, and that's a mixture of measures that target the body, the mind and the spirit."*

Mick Dodson, Australian of the Year, National Press Club address, 17 February 2009

True reconciliation requires national and local solutions achieved through positive and purposeful partnerships, not just for today but for tomorrow. We work for Reconciliation, in partnership with those who believe that there can be an alternative to the present order.





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### OUR SCHOOL

Catherine McAuley College is committed to reconciliation and sees it as the process of bridging and closing the gap that has developed between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders and non-indigenous Australians. Reconciliation is being aware of and sharing in this story, developing a relationship based on an understanding of cultural difference and taking action. The Catherine McAuley College community welcomes and invites First Nations students, families and elders with open hearts and minds, to guide and help us build a future that acknowledges and celebrates First Nations' culture and connection to Country.

We pledge to listen, learn and ask questions and to come to understand how First Nations peoples are interconnected with creation and Country. We vow to walk together to fulfil shared responsibilities caring for our Mother Earth. We promise to defend Indigenous rights to land and natural resources. We aspire to keep Indigenous culture alive to strengthen our joint connection to God's creation.

In solidarity, we aspire to raise our consciousness of present inequities, and advocate for necessary changes in action and policies. We acknowledge historical truths and recognise that those whose land we share have experienced, and still experience, profound injustices.

Our staff and student FIRE Carriers make a commitment to learn and act, and build relationships based on trust and respect. A FIRE Carrier has the opportunity to transform the way that we want our College community to be, as well as our local community.

As members of Catherine McAuley College we are impelled to thrive and serve, through living our Mercy Values and advancing towards reconciliation and healing. Our compassion, service, hospitality, courage, and strong sense of social justice and respect for all creation is what will help us to action the four core values; Spirituality, Cultural Recognition and Awareness, Practical Reconciliation and Justice, and Ecological Stewardship.

### OUR COVENANT

Our Reconciliation Covenant was developed in dialogue and open conversation and discernment with our Koori Education Worker, Josie Garner, and staff and student FIRE Carrier nominees in 2021. The Reconciliation Covenant draft received input from members of the College Executive team, and the Sandhurst Aboriginal Team continue to help support and guide us in this process. The Reconciliation Covenant has been advanced from within the Faith and Mission team, and in 2022 will be enacted through the leadership of the reGEN Leader, Learning Diversity Leader, and FIRE Carrier staff and students.

