



# *Wayngurrla: 'To Make Good'*

(Wadawurrung Language)

First Peoples Engagement Plan 2026–2028



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*The National Trust of Australia (Victoria) acknowledges Traditional Owners of Country throughout Australia and recognise their continuing connection to lands, waters and communities. We pay our respect to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures; and to Elders past and present.*

Language note: The Wadawurrung words in this document are used with permission from Wadawurrung Traditional Owners. The National Trust thanks the Gilson family for granting permission to use these words.

Cover image by Ferne Millen at Women's Forum, Barwon Park.

## Definitions

### **First Peoples**

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples of Australia

### **Traditional Owners**

Aboriginal people who have ongoing custodianship for particular lands or waters.

### **Acknowledgment of Country**

A respectful statement made by anyone, Aboriginal or non-Aboriginal, that recognises the Traditional Owners of the land or waters on which a meeting or event takes place

### **Welcome to Country**

A formal cultural practice delivered by a Traditional Owner or Aboriginal Elder that welcomes people to their Country.

### **Cultural Heritage**

The places, objects, stories, knowledge, and practices that are inherited from past generations, maintained in the present, and passed on to future generations. This includes tangible heritage (such as buildings, landscapes, artefacts, and sites) and intangible heritage (such as language, traditions, and cultural practices).

### **Cultural Heritage Survey**

A systematic assessment conducted in consultation with Traditional Owners to identify, document, and assess cultural heritage values of a place.

### **Interpretation**

Communicating the significance and meaning of a place, object, or story to audiences.

### **Programming**

Planned activities, events, or initiatives designed to engage audiences and communicate values, stories, or themes, including interpretation.

### **Truth-Telling**

The process of acknowledging and sharing honest accounts of history, including the impacts of colonisation, dispossession, and injustice experienced by First Peoples.

### **Co-naming**

The practice of assigning both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal names to a place, feature, or site.

### **Caring for Country**

The responsibility to look after land, waters, and living things through cultural knowledge, practices, and stewardship.

# Vision

To foster a community where First Peoples' voices will be foregrounded in shaping the way that we respect and celebrate Victoria's diverse cultural heritage, building a future of truth, justice, and reconciliation.

## Our Role and Responsibility

As the state's premier community-based heritage advocacy organisation, the National Trust of Australia (Victoria) recognises our responsibility to advocate for and demonstrate best practice in managing and conserving Victoria's cultural heritage. This work must be grounded in truth-telling and historical acceptance, while creating meaningful opportunities for First Peoples to shape how we acknowledge and celebrate Victoria's past and present.

## Our First Peoples Engagement Plan 2026-2028

The 2026 - 2028 First Peoples Engagement Plan (FPEP) is the National Trust of Australia (Victoria)'s very own bespoke action plan, designed to address our reconciliation and First People's focused initiatives. As a not-for-profit, community-based organisation, the development of this bespoke plan reflects the strong foundations our organisation has built through four consecutive Reconciliation Action Plans as part of our reconciliation journey.

The FPEP aligns with the NTAV's Strategic Plan 2023 - 2028 and acknowledges the variety of community and place-based activities that are key to our organisation. Similarly to our Climate Action Plan 2025-2027, the FPEP has adopted a Pillars and Principles format.



Thomas Marks, Peter Thurlow, Wurundjeri Elder Uncle Bill Nicholson Jr, Sean Miller at Pentridge Prison Mural launch

# Our Pillars



## Objective

As a custodian of heritage, we seek to lead by example in the management of our places. We will use and activate our places to acknowledge, respect and visibly reflect First Peoples cultural heritage values, stories and voices. We will facilitate and advocate for First Peoples access and management rights to places of cultural heritage significance to support connection and caring for Country.



## Objective

As an educator of history and as a beneficiary of the dispossession of First Peoples in Victoria, we recognise our privileged position in the cultural heritage industry. We will acknowledge the past, including aspects of our history which are painful and uncomfortable. To move forward towards reconciliation, we must expand our understanding of the past through truth-listening and purposeful action to recognise and address past and present injustices.

We cannot erase history, but we can tell the whole story.



## Objective

As a community-based member organisation, we embrace the diversity of contemporary Australia and seek to foster cultural safety and competency across our organisation. We will strive to create relationships with the Traditional Owners of Country where our places are located, based on trust, courage, and reciprocity. We understand that when First Peoples engage and consult with us it is both an invitation and an instruction to come with purpose.

# Our Principles

1

## Welcoming & Inclusive Spaces

Create spaces that are welcoming, inclusive, and culturally safe for First Peoples and all communities. Through access to places, programming, and resources, we can foster awareness and provide meaningful opportunities for engagement, participation, and decision making.

2

## Respectful Relationships

Build and sustain relationships grounded in trust, respect, and responsibility. Our work should support First Peoples through long-term partnerships, transparent processes, and a commitment to listening, learning, and being an ally.

3

## Courage & Integrity

Act with courage and integrity, acknowledging uncomfortable truths, and challenging dominant narratives. We must embrace honest storytelling and advocate for change and justice.

4

## Centre First Peoples' Knowledge

Centre First Peoples' stories, knowledge, and cultural practices in our content and education. Through interpretation, programming, and training, we can ensure cultural heritage is shared truthfully, respectfully, and under appropriate cultural authority.

5




## Show Up as Allies




Listen deeply and create space for First Peoples' voices on our platforms and at our places. Support pathways for self-determination, including Treaty.



Bunurong Cultural Ecology by Adam Magennis, at Rippon Lea Estate.

# Our Pillars in Action

	 <b>Respect Country</b>	 <b>Support Truth-Telling</b>	 <b>Foster Community</b>
<b>Principles</b>	<b>Actions</b>	<b>Actions</b>	<b>Actions</b>
Welcoming & Inclusive Spaces	Install and update Traditional Owner Acknowledgment plaques at all NTAV places.	Investigate opportunities to host Truth Telling sessions with local Traditional Owners at NTAV places	Create opportunities for First Peoples to access and utilise NTAV places.
	Integrate First Peoples stories into all NTAV programming.	Collate and review all existing cultural heritage surveys of NTAV places. Where necessary, update and create implementation plans for delivery of pending recommendations.	Develop object cataloging standards to ensure respectful language and terminology is used for objects of cultural significance to Australia's First Peoples.
Respectful Relationships	Map and establish relationships with Registered Aboriginal Parties for Country of all NTAV places.	Collaborate with First Peoples to direct curatorial and audience engagement concepts, including arts and cultural projects.	Invite Traditional Owners to provide a Welcome to Country at significant events.
	Facilitate access to relevant NTAV archives, records, research and collections for First Peoples.	Develop a cultural awareness training module for NTAV staff and volunteers in collaboration with First Peoples groups.	Consult with Registered Aboriginal Parties on shared values for heritage advocacy campaigns.
Courage & Integrity	Update our interpretation to include appropriate First Peoples cultural heritage values and histories.	Embrace truth-telling in all aspects of our interpretations, including stories of dispossession, resilience, and the NTAV's own evolution as an organisation.	Assess classification files and documents for use of appropriate and respectful language.
	Undertake a feasibility study focused on co-naming NTAV places to include First Peoples place names in language.	Write up and share stories about NTAV reconciliation projects.	Advocate on state significant issues to support self-determination and uphold the rights of First Peoples to make decisions regarding their cultural heritage, including treaty and the Aboriginal Heritage Act.

	 <b>Respect Country</b>	 <b>Support Truth-Telling</b>	 <b>Foster Community</b>
<b>Principles</b>	<b>Actions</b>	<b>Actions</b>	<b>Actions</b>
Centre First Peoples' Knowledge	Collaborate with Traditional Owners on cultural burning and other land/water care practices at NTAV places.	Review all education Programming to create space for First Peoples voices and stories.	Promote and encourage participation in National Reconciliation Week and NAIDOC Week events to internal and external stakeholders.
	Include First Peoples seasons and knowledge systems in NTAV magazine and garden tours.	Develop a framework for ongoing cultural learning opportunities for staff and volunteers.	Provide staff and volunteers with access to First Peoples-authored and First Peoples centric resources
Show up as allies	Explore provisions for Traditional Owner access to landscapes and involvement in management decisions at NTAV places.	Implement cultural awareness training for existing and new Board Directors, staff, and volunteers.	Regularly review staff and volunteer policies and pathways to ensure they are culturally safe.
	Develop a policy framework for heritage advocacy regarding Victorian First Peoples heritage.	Produce and publish articles in each NTAV magazine that encourage respect for and celebration of First Peoples cultures and histories.	Include First Peoples businesses in procurement and retail purchasing decisions.

## Contact Us

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