



## Richmond High School - In Focus

Thursday 1 June 2017

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### From the Foundation Principal



**Last week we celebrated National Sorry Day and this week is National Reconciliation Week. These important Australian events are much more than tokenistic nods, but a deep and heartfelt recognition that we want things to be better for Aboriginal people in this country.**

#### National Sorry Day

This day pays tribute to the Stolen Generations and their families and commemorates the 20th anniversary of the *Bringing Them Home Report*. The *Bringing Them Home Report*, 1997, confirmed the large-scale removal of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children from their families and it recommended that a National Sorry Day is declared and held each year on 26 May “to commemorate the history of forcible removals and its effects.”

Every Aboriginal family in Australia today has been affected by past government policies that sought to assimilate people and destroy their culture, and National Sorry Day is a time for us to come together to acknowledge the devastation caused to families, communities and clans; to remember the Stolen Generations who have passed onto the Dreaming and to pay tribute to all the Stolen Generations across the Nation who still survive today.

#### National Reconciliation Week

This week is National Reconciliation Week and an important celebration and commemoration in Australia. Each year National Reconciliation Week celebrates and builds on the respectful relationships shared by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and other Australians.

The dates that bookend the week are significant milestones in the reconciliation journey and the important healing that this country needs to go through, both in respect of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders but also the impact of British settlement after 1788 on their lives and their special relationship with the land.

**May 27**—Marks the anniversary of Australia’s most successful referendum and a defining event in our nation’s history. The 1967 referendum saw over 90 per cent of Australians vote to give the Commonwealth the power to make laws for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and recognize them in the national census. Previous to this Section 127 of the Constitution excluded Aboriginal people from being counted in a census.



**3 June**—Commemorates the High Court of Australia’s landmark Mabo decision in 1992, which legally recognized that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples have a special relationship to the land—a relationship that existed prior to colonization and still exists today. This recognition paved the way for land rights or Native Title. As part of putting this column together I read back on some of the press and was shocked at the inherent racism and misinformation propagated about this decision that now most Australians are comfortable with.

As a community leader, I commemorate and celebrate our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and the contribution they make to our nation. I also celebrate the Australians’ who, often in the face of negative forces, dreamed of us as a united people and a nation expanded by an understanding and connection with our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community – not the diminished nation some saw. <http://www.reconciliation.org.au/nrw/what-is-nrw/>

**If I was in our school with our students I would be reflecting with them on these matters. Families who have that have come to hear me speak know my passion for recognition and respect of Aboriginal people. I have a strong message to all young Aboriginal children and that is that we value them and their culture.**

Winter has now officially started and I am deep in my curriculum thinking and benchmarking, this is a most exciting part of my work. The school name is now set as **Richmond High School** and is with the Minister of Education’s office for final approval. I am working on the final registration application now. The building design for the Academic Building is now finished and out to tender. We will choose the builder over the first week of July. Work continues on the Multi-Purpose Building. Application for enrolments have closed and I am processing these now. The numbers were as expected for our first year of operation which is positive.

COLIN SIMPSON



**I promised you some of my thinking about bikes at Richmond High School. I have been very impressed with bike use in our primary schools. In my community, I always ride to do local tasks, shopping and chores.**

I thought I would show off my two bikes ☺. It is a long story how I ended up with two bikes, but I have recently donated my family's older bikes to charity organisations and an international student in need of a bike, and we now have four bikes at home. I am absolutely committed to local bike use as you can see.

The suburb of Richmond really has chronic parking and car issues of great concern to the community. One challenge I have been given in the public forums is to prove that my school is not going to make matters worse. I tend to try and see things more positively and it is clear to me that part of living in the inner area of Melbourne is accepting bicycle use as a benefit. Certainly, our school has very limited parking, and this will be set aside for visitors, in that way they won't be using the street and making matters worse. I will use public transport to get to work each day, and I will be communicating to potential staff that we will not be providing parking and they should follow my lead.

I want us to be regarded widely as a bike friendly school as part of my vision that children and adults will use public transport, bicycles, skateboards and scooters to come to school. To this end we have worked with the Victorian School Building Authority and City of Yarra to ensure bicycle storage around our school. I have also implemented a skateboard storage rack in the school. This is something I put in my last school that was very popular. When parents approved of their children to skateboard to school we will provide safe storage of them.

I have been speaking with Bicycle Network and plan to work closely with them developing the very best bicycle policies for young people, so they are active users, but also safe. <https://www.bicyclenetwork.com.au>

One thing that interests me is seeking support from the Ride2School program to build our approach. A benefit of the Ride2School program is their annual grants for schools registered to our program. Since 2011, the Ride2School program have provided more than \$550,000 worth of grants to Victorian schools, to support more students riding and walking on their journey to school. Each school can apply for grants up to the value of \$5,000. The grant can be used on bike

parking, Ride2School Active Paths, a fleet of bikes for the school, financial contributions to a new bike shed and other bike infrastructure Schools aren't limited in what they can apply for, as long as they can demonstrate a willingness to support more students actively traveling to school. The Ride2School Grants will be split in two rounds each year and I will apply through Round Two during Term Three

- Applications open 17th July 2017
- Applications Close 22nd September 2017

This article from 2011 from 'The Conversation' is worth a read: <http://theconversation.com/why-arent-more-kids-cycling-to-school-3531>

A number of parents have raised the concern that children over 12 can no longer ride on the footpath.

This is a real issue for parents, and many people would certainly advocate that this is raised to 16 so bike use can continue from primary school. Riding on a footpath in our state is not allowed after 12-it is also not allowed in New South Wales and Western Australia. You can ride on a footpath if you are a child under the age of 12, are an adult supervising a child under the age of 12 or have been given and are following the conditions on a medical certificate that says you have a disability that makes it difficult for you to ride on the road. You need to follow the conditions on your medical certificate and show it to a police officer or authorised person when asked.

**In Queensland, Tasmania, South Australia and the Australian Capital Territory any age can ride on a footpath. This is something for our policy makers to reflect on.**

And as a final comment it is important to all of us that young people are safe. Here's a list of safety basics to follow when your child is learning to ride bicycles, scooters and skateboards:

- Wear a helmet. Helmets are compulsory when riding bikes and scooters and recommended when riding skateboards.
- Use protective gear like wrist guards and knee pads when riding a scooter or skateboard.
- Teach your child to look carefully at the riding environment to decide whether it's safe to ride.
- Give your child some practice in a safe area, like your backyard or a park, before heading onto the footpath or road.
- Always make sure a grown-up is with your child while they are riding, until they are at least 10 years old.

#### **Helmets**

Helmets are compulsory for riding bikes and recommended for riding skateboards and scooters. Wearing a helmet will help protect your child against serious head injuries.

I want Richmond High School to be a positive and safe bike participant in our community.

COLIN SIMPSON