

APPENDIX 3 THE FIRE CARRIER PROJECT

Friends Igniting Reconciliation through Education

The FIRE (Friends Igniting Reconciliation through Education) Carrier Project is a joint initiative of Aboriginal Catholic Ministry Victoria and the Opening the Doors Foundation with the Sandhurst Catholic Education Office to promote Reconciliation through education in Sandhurst schools. The FIRE Carrier Project seeks to keep the Reconciliation flame alight in schools, educating the wider community about Reconciliation, our shared history and cultures.

The FIRE Carriers are elected annually, in the same manner as other school representatives. Students and teachers are commissioned in each school community. The teacher FIRE Carriers in the school lead their current FIRE Carriers in planning initiatives and events. The teacher FIRE Carrier in the school is usually a member of the Sandhurst Aboriginal Network.

The FIRE Carrier accepts the title and role description, in a special FIRE Commissioning Ceremony and joins the school's FIRE Carrier Covenant Planning Group.

The FIRE Carrier Commissioning Ceremony

The nominated student and teacher FIRE Carriers are invited to a school assembly or opening or closing year Mass; the same time when other school student leaders are commissioned in a school, for a FIRE commissioning ceremony. The ceremony includes the nominated students being commissioned around a fire and making a commitment to the role of a FIRE Carrier. The students and teachers are then presented with the symbolic FIRE badge. The following year, the ceremony will be repeated with the previous FIRE carriers invited to pass the FIRE on to the newly elected FIRE Carriers.

Following are examples of the actions the FIRE Carriers undertake:

- raising the Aboriginal Flag
- helping with Reconciliation activities
- writing prayers for Aboriginal people
- encouraging the use of Aboriginal Liturgy
- acknowledging traditional custodians
- fundraising for Opening The Doors Foundation
- helping to write and action their school's Covenant
- celebrating significant dates in our shared story
- attending FIRE Carrier meetings

The FIRE Carrier Covenant

The FIRE Carrier Teams in schools and Colleges enter into a Covenant each year with Aboriginal Catholic Ministry. The Covenant is a living document where each year the school adds to the list of Reconciliation events and initiatives and sets targets and timeframes for the actions listed.

The Covenant includes the following elements:

- Spirituality
- Cultural Recognition and Awareness
- Practical Reconciliation and Justice.

All FIRE Carriers are asked to remember Michael McDaniel's words:

My invitation to everyone is that in your everyday power, in your work place with your regular authority, with your everyday resources, turn your mind occasionally to what you can do, for the benefit of all Aboriginal people.

Prof Michael McDaniel, Wiradjuri Man