

Parish Pastoral Council 29 July, 2020
Report on Ecumenism

We have already noticed the importance, in the report for 17 June this year

- Of having an Aboriginal Committee in the parish
- Of having the Uluru Statement from the Heart displayed in St Augustine's Church
- Of having the plaque obtained from the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Catholic Council (NATSICC) displayed in the Church
- Of working towards holding an Aboriginal Mass in the Church

It is important now that we draw up a Reconciliation Action Plan along the lines of ideas raised by Michael Bell and consider the priorities of the points in the plan. We should remember, then, the fact that the construction of St Augustine's Church occurred on the site of the Coming of the Bogong Moths Ceremonial Ground and consider how an acknowledgement of the significance of the site and an appropriate commemoration would make it possible for the two communities for whom the site is deeply important to come to a shared sense of its enduring meaning.

There are various ways in which this meaning could be reached, such as a Smoking ceremony, a Site blessing and other activities, including the use of works of art, panels of information, yarning and healing circles, projects of research and religious ceremony.

As Michael Bell has said, we "need to give the community the leadership, ownership and creativity". There are other significant examples of such themes in Yass: the artwork on the bridge and the Yerribee walking path. Would it be possible to use the bell tower in some way? To recreate a bora ring? To celebrate Mass outside? To create exterior Aboriginal Stations of the Cross?

Activity of the kind to which Michael Bell has referred has already occurred in Yass, with the example of the Yass Minor Rugby League adopting a design which incorporated Aboriginal motifs and language.

I open these ideas for discussion, with the suggestion that we consider the point in the progression of these activities at which we place the NATSICC plaque in the church and how we do that. For example, could it be affixed after a Smoking ceremony and/or a Site blessing? In a Mass which followed a Smoking ceremony and/or a Site blessing?

Bryan Coleborne
28 July, 2020.