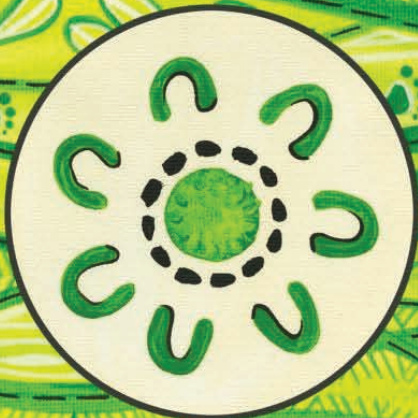


Gadhaba
Local Aboriginal Network

Community Plan 2020–2025

Mansfield Victoria



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ARTWORK

Artwork used on the front cover was created by Safina Stewart, a long-term participant of LANs in the Eastern suburbs of Melbourne. Safina is of Aboriginal (Wuthithi country) and Torres Strait Islander (Mabuiag Island) descent and her artwork has been adopted as the state-wide branding for all 39 LANs in Victoria.

The gum leaves are a symbol of 'Welcome' and they remind us that we have been entrusted with the responsibility to care for all creation. The fluid waterways represent the creeks, streams and rivers that support all life, while the abundant lush environment is captured in the green hues. The pathways of footprints honour those who walk with heart attitudes of respect, caring and sharing. The green tones highlight the desire of our Indigenous community to aspire to greater wholeness, vitality and health. The campfire scene represents the Elders and community members of Local Aboriginal Networks who gather to represent and strengthen our Indigenous community.



Victorian LANs State-wide Branding – artwork by Safina Stewart

LOGO

Gadhaba's logo was developed using the LAN state-wide branding in the shape of a shield. The logo is used to distinguish the Mansfield LAN from other LANs in Victoria, and to identify the traditional name adopted by Mansfield LAN. 'Gadhaba', pronounced Gud-a-bah, is a Taungurung word meaning 'Together'. This is the traditional name adopted by the Mansfield Local Aboriginal Network in 2012, as it reflects our vision of working together alongside non-Aboriginal people to achieve our goals and aspirations.



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS AND DISCLAIMERS

Country

The Gadhaba Local Aboriginal Network (GLAN) is based in Mansfield, Victoria and acknowledges the Taungurung People of the Yowung-illam-balluk clan (stone dwelling people) as the Traditional Owners of the land on which it operates, and pays respect to their Ancestors and to their Elders, past, present, and emerging.

Inclusiveness

Use of the word 'Aboriginal' throughout this document refers to people of Aboriginal and / or Torres Strait Islander descent.

Warning to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People

This document may contain the names and images of people who have passed away.

Document Version

This Community Plan is a dynamic document that may be reviewed and refreshed regularly. The first version of this document was created in 2020. It may contain terminology from this period including previous names of government and non-government organisations, departments or agencies. Every effort will be made to update the terminology whenever the document is reviewed.

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FOREWORD

- *Aunty Bernadette Franklin*

The Gadhaba Community Plan 2020-2025 is a living document developed from earlier plans, to capture our interests and desires for a better community life in Mansfield – one which is inclusive, inspiring and practical.

Gadhaba seeks to achieve our plans through this strategic document which guides our thinking. The Plan was developed by members of the GLAN and builds on previous activities and partnerships. I am a founding member of the GLAN, celebrating Aboriginal culture all my life, and for the past 20 years have been actively raising awareness in Mansfield.

It is encouraging that the involvement of many GLAN members in the process of developing this Plan has been so productive. It is a testament to our name GADHABA, which means “together” in Taungurung language. We have, and continue to, work together, as we navigate our way forward in Mansfield.

A recent example of forward and collaborative thinking and planning in Mansfield was the achievement of re-naming Mt Battery / Beolite. This renaming acknowledges in a deeply meaningful way one of our esteemed local Aboriginal ngaranggeti, a leader pre-1860 of the Yowung-illam-balluk clan of the Taungurung nation.

This Community Plan will change over its five-year life, as our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and non-Aboriginal community priorities change. Review will be important. The Plan is not the end of the process to achieve our goals, but a guiding document which will be the basis for decisions about priorities and resourcing for community development initiatives which improve general awareness for all residents.

As a proud Taungurung woman born in Mansfield, I am delighted to have the honour of writing this forward, endorsing the content, and thanking all those who have contributed. My hope is that my contributions to Mansfield and GLAN will make the world a better place to live in for my two children, and my six grandchildren.



Taungurung Elder, Mansfield resident
Photo - *Miranda Connaughton*



Image of Mt Battery / Beolite, Mansfield 2020.
Photo - *Aunty Bernadette Franklin*



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INTRODUCTION

Establishment

Local Indigenous Networks (LINs) were established in Victoria from 2008 by Aboriginal Victoria to enable and support local Aboriginal communities to set local priorities and problem solve to develop local solutions, improve social cohesion, strengthen relationships, and to empower Aboriginal people to participate in civic and community life. Mansfield's Local Indigenous Network was established in 2012 – known locally as the Gadhaba Local Indigenous Network (GLIN).

Re-branded as LANs

In 2016, Local Indigenous Networks (LINs) were re-branded as Local Aboriginal Networks (LANs). This re-branding coincided with the launch of a state-wide strategic plan, following an extensive community consultation process. The re-branding also included the adoption of the LAN artwork emblem, to raise the profile of LANs across Victoria. The GLIN became the GLAN.

Structure

LANs are volunteer based, non-incorporated community action groups made up of local Aboriginal people who come together regularly to address local issues that are important to them, through the implementation of a Community Plan. LANs do not represent, nor do they undertake Traditional Owner (TO) business, which includes management and protection of Aboriginal cultural heritage.

Policy Context

LANs form part of State government's Aboriginal community engagement mechanism, as set out in the *Victorian Aboriginal Affairs Framework 2018-2023*. LANs directly contribute to 'Closing the Gap' and 'Self Determination' initiatives as they independently address state-wide priorities described in the *Victorian Local Aboriginal Networks Five Year Plan 2016-2020*. LANs do this at the local level by developing and implementing localised *Community Plans*.



NAIDOC Week July 2015, taken at the Opening of the Flag Poles installation, Station Precinct. Mansfield. Photo - Mansfield Courier.

OUR HISTORY

The history of the Gadhaba Local Aboriginal Network is linked to the story of William Barak's relationship with Ann Fraser Bon during the 1800s. Ann Fraser Bon was a Scottish-born Australian pastoralist, philanthropist and advocate for Aboriginal people. She owned Wappan Station, near Bonnie Doon and was a good friend of William Barak, a respected Aboriginal leader and spokesman of the late 1800s. They are often referred to as the forerunners to modern day reconciliation in Victoria.



Left: William Barak - age 33 - Yarra Yarra Tribe, by Carl Walter, 1866.
Photograph - Albumen silver.

Right: Ann Fraser Bon, noted philanthropist with a keen interest in Aboriginal welfare.
Studio portrait c1920. Photographer - Unknown. Australian War Memorial.

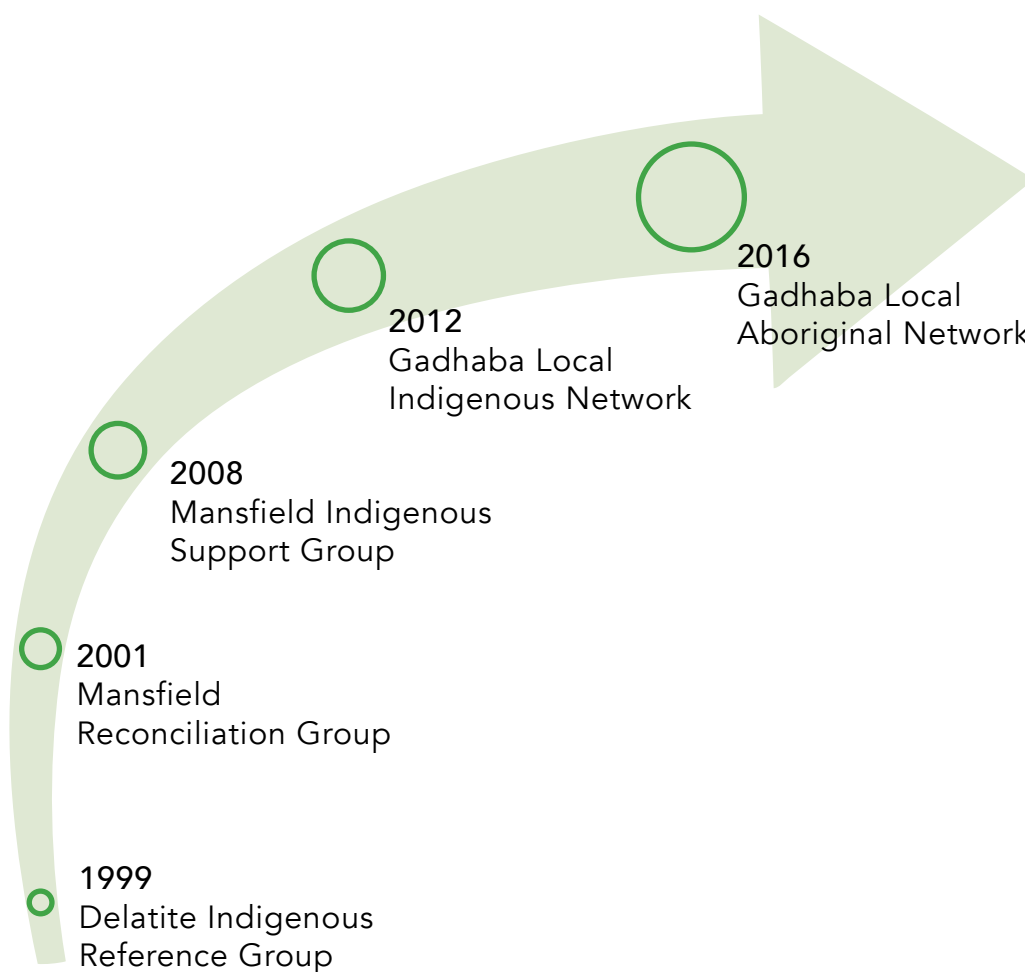
In 1999 a play written by local playwright Heather Matthew titled *The Widow of Wappan* was performed in Mansfield to large audiences. Soon after this performance the *Delatite Indigenous Reference Group (DIRG)* was formed. This group existed until 2006 and was successful in advising Mansfield Shire Council to develop policy related to Indigenous issues, including local protocols such as Acknowledgement of Country.

The Mansfield Reconciliation Group was formed in 2002, and from 2006 its role became more prominent in raising awareness about Aboriginal matters within the Mansfield community. Then in 2008, the *Mansfield Indigenous Support Group (MISG)* was established, with a particular focus on improving awareness in local schools. This group was active until 2012.

The establishment of Mansfield's LAN came about following a successful campaign by the Mansfield Indigenous Support Group (MISG) to be recognised as a LAN. In 2012, the MISG effectively became the Mansfield LAN. Soon after being established the Mansfield LAN adopted its traditional language name - Gadhaba.

OUR EVOLUTION

The origin of Gadhaba shows a long and well-established history of strong partnerships, that enabled these various groups to adapt and transform to meet the changing priorities of the local Aboriginal community, and to shape a strong and certain future.



Our Future

Gadhaba will continue to work with our community and key partners to achieve our goals, but underpinning our success is genuine reconciliation. This relies on our community to recognise and respect the First Peoples of this land, and to commit to working towards a more equal and respectful future - together.

OUR REGION

The Shire of Mansfield is home to almost 9,000 people, and the township of Mansfield is located 180 km north east of Melbourne, in the foothills of the Great Dividing Range. Geographical attractions include Mount Buller, Mount Stirling, Lake Eildon, Delatite & Goulburn Rivers, and the Alpine National Park.

Traditional Owners

There are two Traditional Owner groups within Mansfield Shire local government area:

- Taungurung
- Gunaikurnai

Taungurung Land & Waters Council (TLaWC) is the Registered Aboriginal Party for the majority of Mansfield Shire. Gunaikurnai Land and Waters Aboriginal Corporation (GLaWAC) is the Registered Aboriginal Party for an area in the east of Mansfield Shire.

Registered Aboriginal Parties

Information about Registered Aboriginal Parties, including detailed maps on areas they cover, can be accessed on the Victorian State Government website at:

<https://www.vic.gov.au/aboriginalvictoria/heritage/registered-aboriginal-parties.html>.

Although Gadhaba is based in Mansfield, we welcome participation of any Aboriginal person living in Mansfield, and from neighbouring Local Government Areas.



Hume Region, North East Victoria

OTHER ABORIGINAL NETWORKS

There are four other LANs in North East Victoria that are working to address their own priorities and, like us, they are looking for opportunities to come together and share experiences which may help us to achieve our goals.

These other Networks include:

- Wodonga Aboriginal Network
- Dirrawarra Indigenous Network
(based in the Rural City of Wangaratta)
- Seymour Local Aboriginal Network
- Shepparton Local Aboriginal Network



Regional LAN Forum – Shepparton 2018

Regional and State-wide LAN Forums

Regional and State-wide LAN Forums provide opportunities for LANs to showcase their work, and to collaborate with and learn from the experiences of other networks. Gadhaba actively participates in, and represents at all LAN forums, and is committed to maintaining connections with other LANs in our region.

OUR CHALLENGES

Australian Bureau of Statistics census data (2016) indicates a relatively small Aboriginal population of 74 residing in the local government area of Mansfield. This poses many challenges for the Gadhaba LAN.

While the participation rate of local Aboriginal people in the Gadhaba LAN is well over the state-wide target of 10% of the local Aboriginal population of the area, the number of Aboriginal people actively participating in the LAN is well below the average for most other LANs in Victoria.

As a result, substantial pressure is placed on a handful of local Aboriginal people to actively lead Gadhaba in its continuous cycle of identifying and addressing local priorities. As these networks are volunteer based, burn-out is an ongoing and significant risk.

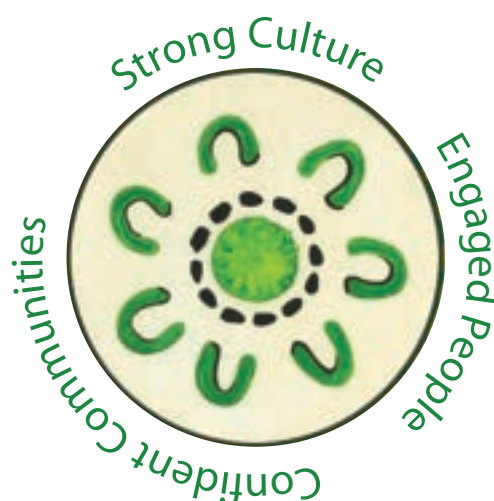
With significant involvement of non-Aboriginal participants within the Gadhaba LAN, there are challenges around ensuring the collective Aboriginal voice is heard. This level of genuine partnership between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people, is also a unique strength of this LAN, that can sometimes be overlooked or misrepresented.



OUR VISION AND VALUES

In 2015 all LANs in Victoria worked together to develop a collective LAN Vision that remains relevant today: "Strong Culture, Engaged People, Confident Communities".

Our LAN Vision includes with the word "Together" – our traditional name, because we can't do it alone - we need the support of our community to achieve our Vision:



**"Strong Culture, Engaged People,
Confident Communities – Together"**

Values

Our core values underpin our fundamental beliefs as a LAN of what is right and wrong. They guide our behaviour and help us determine if we are on the right path to achieving our aim and objectives.

Respect – for self and for others

Recognition – showing admiration and gratitude for achievements

Value – how we are valued for our contribution and how we value others

Integrity – a personal quality of fairness and doing the right thing

Accountability – for our actions and for the safety and wellbeing others

Inclusiveness – letting people in and making them feel welcome

OUR OBJECTIVES AND STRATEGIES

1. Increase active participation of local Aboriginal people

- Provide a safe and welcoming space for our Aboriginal community to connect, share, learn and lead.
- Maintain and strengthen our Network by engaging with and recruiting more Aboriginal participants from the local area.
- Provide a critical and effective platform to celebrate cultural diversity within the Aboriginal community.
- Use our website and social media platforms to provide another level of access and participation in the Network.
- Build and support the capacity and capability of our participants which harnesses the network's collective abilities and builds on the contributions of previous participants.

2. Continue to strengthen and increase stakeholder partnerships

- Build and maintain strong mutually beneficial relationships with Mansfield Shire Council, other government agencies and Traditional Owners through collaborative planning, implementation and conduct of local projects and events.
- Work with Mansfield District Hospital and other local health services to enhance staff and organisational cultural awareness, cultural competence and cultural safety for the Aboriginal community.
- Identify new and existing partner agencies and organisations and seek to engage and network with their representatives during LAN activities.
- Continue to hold our regular monthly meetings at MACE and seek to renew our bookings annually.
- Promote and maintain strong links with our primary partner organisation, and seek to renew arrangements annually.

3. Engage and support local Koorie young people

- Identify and collaborate with stakeholders to establish a Working Group that engages Koorie young people for the purpose of planning, conducting and evaluating cultural and other activities.

- Partner with the Koorie Youth Council (KYC) to establish an annual activity based in Mansfield for regional Koorie young people.
- Engage local Koorie young people to determine their needs and aspirations and develop an Action Plan for the Working Group to implement.
- Enable the Working Group to collaborate with existing youth networks regionally to maximise opportunities for Mansfield Koorie young people to participate in regional and state-wide youth activities.

4. Support cultural information exchange and celebrations of culture

- Establish an edible and medicinal garden to engage students, tourists and locals and facilitate cultural information exchange.
- Lead the planning and coordination of local NAIDOC Week activities annually.
- Partner with and support other local and regional stakeholders to plan and conduct activities during other culturally significant dates e.g. National Reconciliation Week.
- Use our website and social media platforms to promote and showcase cultural information exchange and celebrations of culture.

5. Work towards a permanent place to come together

- Positively influence policies and programs that impact on our LAN, and advocate on matters of importance to our LAN and our participants.
- Communicate effectively to our partners and others outside our network to ensure the Objectives and Vision of our LAN are known by all.
- On establishment of the edible and medicinal garden, schedule regular gatherings at the site to enable the network to come together.
- Identify and partner with key stakeholders to undertake a Feasibility Study to determine the viability of a permanent gathering place in Mansfield for the Aboriginal community.

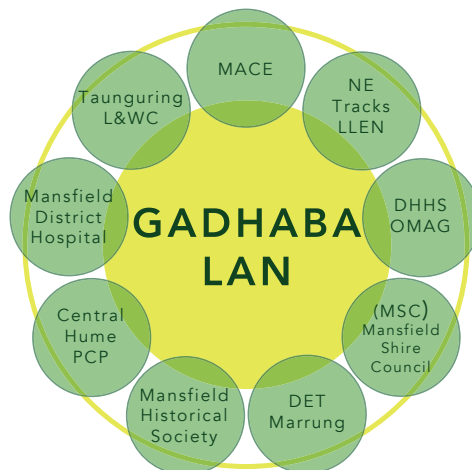
OUR PARTNERSHIPS

The Gadhaba LAN operates as a non-incorporated community volunteer network with the support of key partners including government and non-government organisations, agencies and other community groups and networks.

Partnerships are vital to our success, and the GLAN is committed to strengthening existing partnerships and developing new partnerships to enable the implementation of our strategies to achieve our objectives and our vision.

Our existing key partners include:

- North East Tracks Local Learning and Employment Network (NE Tracks LLEN)
- Mansfield Adult Continuing Education Centre (MACE)
- Central Hume Primary Care Partnership (CHPCP)
- Mansfield Shire Council, including:
 - Mansfield Library
 - Mansfield Youth Centre
- Mansfield District Hospital – Mansfield District Hospital Community Advisory Committee
- Taungurung Land and Waters Council (TLaWC)
- Mansfield Historical Society
- Department of Education and Training - Marrung Area Implementation Team (MAIT), including local schools
- Department of Health and Human Services – Ovens and Murray Aboriginal Governance Committee



WORKING WELL TOGETHER

The GLAN acknowledges the partners we have established relationships with, and the Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal participants who make up this Network.

As a community group, we have established ***Terms of Reference (ToR)*** that set out guiding principles under which we have agreed to operate the Network, meet and do business. Specifically, our ToR encompasses participation, structure, roles, decision making, communication and processes.

We at Gadhaba LAN have also made and endorsed an Agreement: ***Working Well Together***. Guided by our core values, we will always strive to achieve this by remembering our traditional name and what it means: Together. Importantly, it is everyone's responsibility to implement this Agreement, to ensure behaviour is respectful and free from harm or threat.

The ToR and Agreement both demonstrate we are committed to providing a welcome and safe environment at all our meetings, gatherings and events, enabling us to work effectively together to achieve common goals.







Image of the Scar Tree. Station Precinct - Mansfield Victoria.



*Image of a pottery tile at the base of the Scar Tree.
Station Precinct - Mansfield Victoria.*