

The *Manjaree Mia Kaart* Project

Reconciliation-in-action: building of Aboriginal *kaartdijin*/ knowledge, understanding and friendships within a Catholic university

Louise Austen, Neta Knapp & Rommie Masarei
The University of Notre Dame

Creating an environment for reconciliation between coloniser and Aboriginal communities has been a long process and developing a process of reconciliation depends on a commitment by people towards working for social justice and to have courage to build relationships that acknowledges, celebrates and demonstrates respect for one another. The aim of Reconciliation Australia is to encourage all Australians to become involved in building a “just, equitable and reconciled Australia” and provides a framework to achieve these aims for organisations, institutions and individuals. The framework is based on five inter-related factors: race relations, equality and equity, unity, institutional integrity and historical acceptance. Throughout 2017, staff, students and members of the wider community experienced this growing reconciliation movement at the Fremantle campus of the University of Notre Dame, with the major focus being on the launch of the Aboriginal student meeting place *Manjaree*¹.

The aim of this presentation is to highlight the success of the six-week *Manjaree Mia Kaart*² Project, a significant activity that shortly followed the launch, and identify what elements underpinned its success. This project embodied both the spirit of reconciliation outlined by the national organisation and the sacrament of reconciliation the Catholic Church teaches, as taught by both Pope Paul VI and Pope John Paul II. The project brought together several key people who share the dream of inclusion, social justice and spirituality: Nyungar community elder, teacher and artist, Neta Knapp and visionary Executive Director Rommie Masarei, with the support of Louise Austen.

¹ *Manjaree* –Meeting Place (Nyungar)

² *Manjaree Mia Kaart* -a place of learning, a place of history and a place of spiritual journey of knowledge