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## Carrying torch for reconciliation

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Fire ceremony: Kilbreda students gain indigenous blessing as they work towards reconciliation.

THIRTEEN years 9 and 10 students and two staff members from Kilbreda College, Mentone, were recently appointed Friends Igniting Reconciliation through Education (FIRE) carriers.

The commissioning ceremony was led by Sherry Balcombe, of the Aboriginal Catholic Ministry of Victoria.

The college and its community, which recognises that it is standing on the sacred land of the Bunurong people of the Kulin nation, acknowledged that the 15 FIRE carriers were responsible for educating themselves, their peers and the community to respect and celebrate indigenous culture.

"As a school community, we have a responsibility to acknowledge the discrimination and injustice that has been inflicted on indigenous Australians," co-principal Teresa Lincoln said.

"It is our responsibility to promote equality by honouring each unique culture in our society."

During the commissioning ceremony, which stemmed from the college's existing commitment to reconciliation, the FIRE carriers were welcomed with a traditional blessing by Ms Balcombe which took place around a fire symbolising the heart of Aboriginal culture.

Significantly, a sacred prayer more than 40,000 years old belonging to the Aboriginals of the Kimberly was read by the new FIRE carriers.

Kilbreda College respects indigenous spiritual connections and beliefs and aims to work with others to reconcile wrongs done in the past and deepen the understanding of indigenous cultures, Ms Lincoln said.

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