Baseball Canberra (BC) – Reconciliation Commitment Statement

Baseball Canberra acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of the lands on which we play, train and gather, the Ngunnawal people and other Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples connected to the Canberra region. We pay our respects to Elders past and present and recognise the important contribution First Nations peoples make to our communities, culture and sport.

Baseball Canberra is committed to fostering respectful relationships with First Nations peoples and creating opportunities for children and young people to participate, develop skills, build confidence and experience the many benefits of organised sport.

Reconciliation Plan (Practical and Community Focused)

1. Commitment to Inclusion

Baseball Canberra is committed to providing a welcoming, culturally safe and inclusive environment for First Nations players, families, coaches, volunteers and officials.

We recognise that participation in sport can provide young people with opportunities to:

- Build confidence and self-esteem.
- Develop leadership, teamwork and communication skills.
- Improve physical and mental wellbeing.
- Strengthen connections with peers, family and community.
- Access positive pathways for personal development and lifelong participation in sport.

Our aim is to ensure all First Nations children and families feel welcome and supported to participate in baseball.

2. Visibility, Recognition and Respect

Baseball Canberra will strengthen its commitment to reconciliation by:

- Publishing a First Nations acknowledgement and reconciliation statement on the BC website.
- Inviting a Ngunnawal Elder to conduct a Welcome to Country at season launches and major events where appropriate.
- Including an Acknowledgement of Country at significant events and meetings.
- Promoting National Reconciliation Week, NAIDOC Week and other significant First Nations dates through BC communication channels.
- Highlighting and celebrating the achievements of First Nations players, volunteers and community members within baseball.

3. Community Partnerships and Engagement

Baseball Canberra will seek to build genuine relationships with local First Nations communities and organisations to better understand how baseball can support community aspirations and encourage participation.

This may include:

- Connecting with local Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations, schools, youth services and sporting groups.
- Inviting First Nations community representatives to provide advice on culturally appropriate engagement activities.
- Exploring opportunities to attend community events and introduce baseball to children and families through come-and-try activities.
- Supporting and promoting existing First Nations sporting and community initiatives where possible.
- Encouraging First Nations participation in BC events, governance and decision-making.

BC recognises that strong and respectful relationships are the foundation for meaningful engagement and long-term participation.

4. Participation Pathways for Children and Young People

Supporting junior participation will be a priority area of focus.

Baseball Canberra will:

- Actively encourage First Nations children and young people to participate in junior baseball programs.
- Work with clubs to identify and reduce barriers to participation where possible, including equipment, registration costs and access to information.
- Promote opportunities for First Nations players to participate in representative pathways and development programs.
- Explore opportunities for introductory baseball clinics and school-based engagement activities in partnership with local organisations.
- Encourage First Nations parents, carers and family members to become involved as volunteers, coaches, scorers and team managers.

BC recognises that early engagement in sport can help young people develop healthy lifestyles, positive social connections and a strong sense of belonging.

5. Celebrating Culture and Connection to Country

Baseball Canberra will explore opportunities to recognise and celebrate First Nations cultures through baseball, including:

- Incorporating First Nations artwork into representative uniforms, merchandise or promotional materials, subject to appropriate consultation and permissions.
- Sharing stories that recognise the connection between sport, community and Country.
- Continuing to support initiatives such as the inclusion of Indigenous artwork on representative uniforms, including the ACT Roos uniforms worn at the Australian Youth Championships.
- Exploring opportunities for cultural elements to be included in major BC events and celebrations.

6. Learning and Continuous Improvement

Board members, volunteers and key stakeholders will continue to learn about reconciliation and culturally inclusive practices through engagement with:

- Baseball Australia's First Nations participation initiatives.
- Relevant community, sport and inclusion forums.
- Local First Nations community representatives and organisations.
- Ongoing reflection and review of BC's progress and priorities.

Summary

Baseball Canberra supports the principles of reconciliation through practical actions focused on respect, relationships, participation and opportunity. By working alongside local First Nations communities and encouraging greater involvement of children and young people in baseball, BC aims to create positive experiences that support wellbeing, inclusion, personal development and community connection. As our relationships and capacity grow, we will continue to strengthen our contribution to reconciliation through sport.

Additional recommendations

To make the plan even more impactful without significant cost, BC could consider:

- Establishing an annual "First Nations Round" that celebrates culture and community.
- Offering a small number of junior registration or equipment scholarships through sponsorship rather than BC funding.
- Partnering with local schools with higher First Nations enrolments to deliver introductory baseball sessions.
- Creating a First Nations Ambassador role for a player, coach, parent or community member.
- Inviting local First Nations athletes from any sport to speak at junior development days.
- Tracking First Nations participation (where voluntarily disclosed) to measure improvements over time and identify barriers.