



RECONCILIATION
ACTION PLAN

REFLECT



GREATER
SHEPPARTON

MAKING
**GREAT
THINGS
HAPPEN**

GREATER SHEPPARTON CITY COUNCIL
**RECONCILIATION
ACTION PLAN**
REFLECT JULY 2019 - JUNE 2020

A person wearing a blue shirt is shown from the waist down, placing a bundle of green leaves and sticks onto a metal stand. The background is a blurred outdoor setting with green grass and trees.

OUR ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF TRADITIONAL OWNERS

“We, Greater Shepparton City Council, acknowledge the Traditional Owners of the land which now comprises Greater Shepparton. We pay respect to their tribal Elders, we celebrate their continuing culture and we acknowledge the memory of their ancestors”

We are proud to say that Greater Shepparton is a significant gathering place for all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples*.

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In writing: Locked Bag 1000, Shepparton Vic 3632

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Phone: **(03) 5832 9700**.

*Council recognises that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples come from many clans, with a variety of different languages and customs. For ease of use Council has chosen to use 'Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples' throughout this report to refer to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples and communities, except when using a direct quote.

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MAYOR'S MESSAGE

As the Mayor of Greater Shepparton I am proud to represent a community that is home to so many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples, and has such strong Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures.



The traditional lands that now comprise the Greater Shepparton Local Government Area have long been home to the oldest continuing culture in the world. These lands are the sites where Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples live, develop their cultures, preserve the land and waterways, and pass on their knowledge from generation to generation.

Unfortunately these lands are also the sites where cruelty, segregation, inequity, and hardships were endured in the decades after colonisation.

It is my hope that by acknowledging uncomfortable truths, Council's first Reconciliation Action Plan will then be a basis for the continuing acknowledgement and celebration of the strength of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples and cultures in Greater Shepparton.

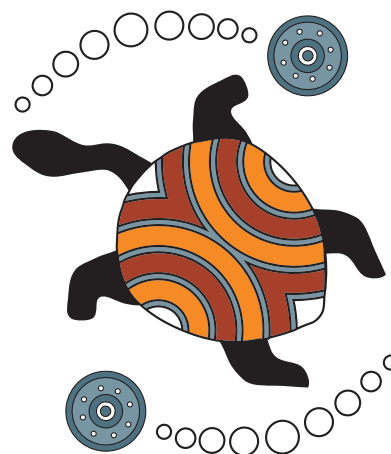
Though this Plan is an internal Council Plan, I hope it will be regarded by the entire community as Council endeavouring to build a foundation from which we can move toward reconciliation.

I hope this Plan will indicate to everyone that Council is proud of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples and cultures.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Kim O'Keeffe".

**Cr Kim O'Keeffe,
Mayor**

Left:
Don Briggs, SACRED BATTLE SITE, 1990.
Natural pigments, ochre and acrylic
Shepparton Art Museum, Sir Andrew Fairley Bequest, 1992.
Courtesy and © the artist.
Image: Jamie Durrant





CEO MESSAGE

As the Chief Executive Officer of the Greater Shepparton City Council, I am pleased to contribute this message in Council's first Reconciliation Action Plan.

I acknowledge the Traditional Owners of the land which now comprises Greater Shepparton. I pay respect to their Tribal Elders, I celebrate their continuing cultures and I acknowledge the memory of their ancestors.

I also acknowledge that Peoples of the First Nations occupied this land for many thousands of years prior to white settlement and that this settlement caused disruption and dislodgement to many communities without any agreement from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples.

Greater Shepparton City Council is fortunate to encompass a local government area that has strong Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples who are justifiably proud of their cultures, languages, and heritage.

When writing this Plan, Council thought deeply about truth telling and what it means for reconciliation. Therefore it was important that Council's first Reconciliation Action Plan outlined some of the truth of our shared histories to provide a base to move forward.

History tells us that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples' communities in the local area have suffered from murder, rape, abuse, a system of traditional government ignored, and families separated. Generally, when white settlement occurred, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples were dislodged from their land and incarcerated in settlements. During this process some were killed and/or raped, some were used for labour and became trackers for the authorities. Over a relatively short period in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples' histories, 1788 to present, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples' cultures and lifestyles have been changed forever.

This Reconciliation Action Plan is an internal organisational plan which outlines Council's commitment to reconciliation and to ensuring Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples and cultures are respected, acknowledged, and celebrated.

The Plan builds on work already undertaken by providing a platform to strategically target opportunities, strengthen relationships and demonstrate respect. It is anticipated the achievement of the actions in this Plan will strengthen Council as an organisation and contribute to a stronger community.

I see this Plan as the next step in Council's journey; providing a meaningful contribution to reconciliation and an opportunity for Council to lead by example.



Peter Harriott,
Chief Executive Officer



ARTIST'S PROFILE

Dixon Patten is a proud Yorta Yorta and Gunnai man and has family bloodlines from Gunditjmarra, Dhudhuroa, Wiradjuri, Yuin, Wemba Wemba, Barapa Barapa, Monaro.



Dixon is an experienced graphic designer and practicing artist and has several family members who have influenced him and have given him knowledge of traditional art practices and stories. Before moving into freelance operation Dixon was employed by the Koorie Heritage Trust Cultural Centre in Melbourne for eight years. During this time his understanding of local history and the integral role that art plays in community deepened.

Dixon's major advantages to building a reputable graphic design business are his knowledge around traditional and contemporary Aboriginal art practice and industry standard practice. Furthermore Dixon prides himself on his ability to meet client needs and create work that accurately reflects their brief. He often uses bright colours to appeal to a younger audience and works within stipulated brand guidelines and style guides.

With 10 years' experience working in the arts, within Aboriginal organisations and together with corporate and government entities, Dixon has developed a detailed understanding of the communication needs and wants of Indigenous communities, corporate and government organisations.

Dixon Patten
Director of Bayila Creative and
Graphic Artist/Designer



Artwork Narrative:

This artwork represents Aboriginal and Non-Aboriginal people walking together towards reconciliation.

The centred circle represents Yorta Yorta people's connection to land, water and country; they sit together whilst they practice culture and share stories.

The mighty Murray River flows through and represents life's journey. Other rivers and creeks are represented by the blue rivers/paths.

The Long-Neck Turtle is the Yorta Yorta people's totem. The 3 turtles, represent Elders, Adults and Children or past, present and future.

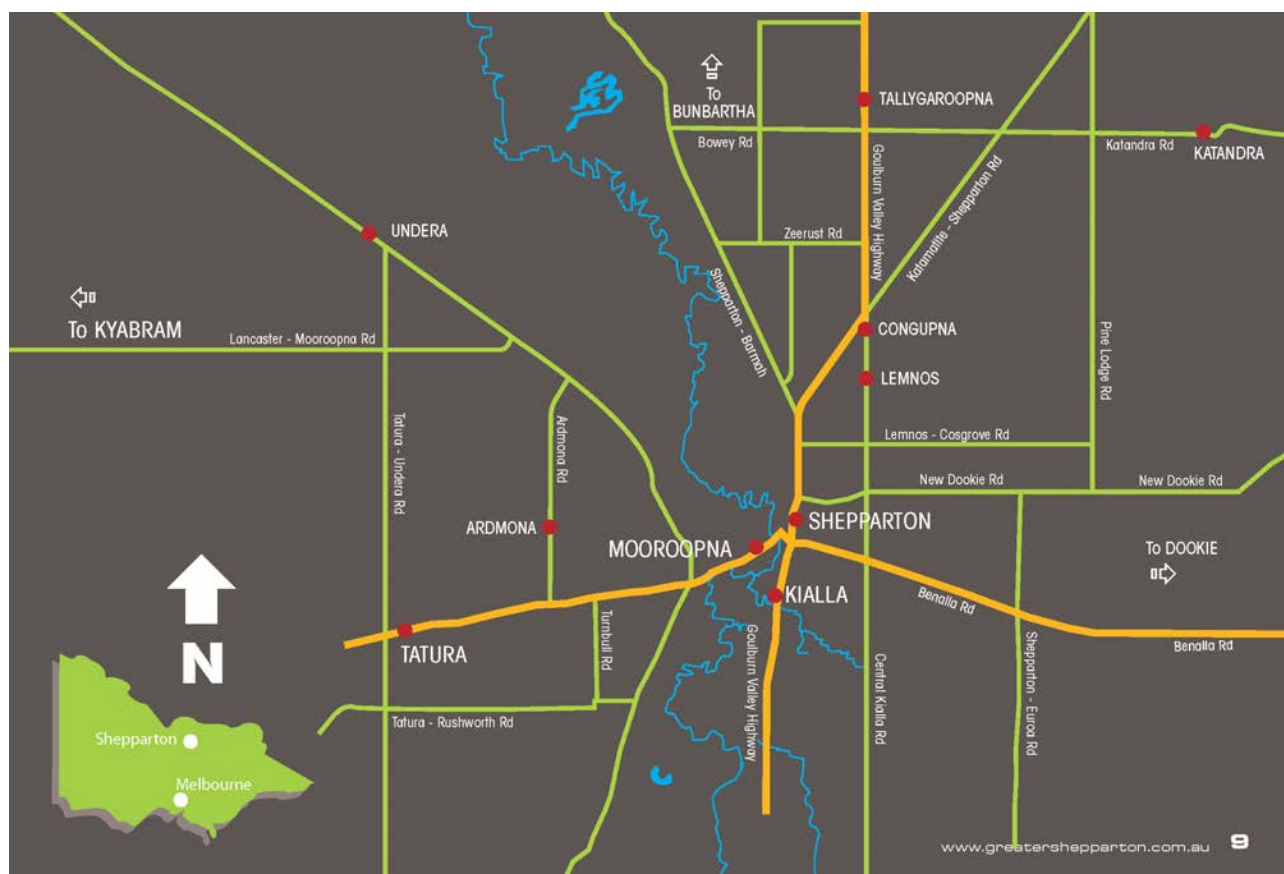
The gum leaves and hands represent unity and mutual exchange of knowledge and culture between Aboriginal and Non-Aboriginal people.

The shields represent culture remaining strong.

The circles represent the different family/clan/ language groups across the region.

OUR BUSINESS

Greater Shepparton is a vibrant diverse community located approximately two hours (180km) north of Melbourne in the Goulburn Valley - the heart of regional Victoria. As well as a large Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population, Greater Shepparton has a history of migration.



Greater Shepparton City Council is governed by nine elected Councillors, and operates in accordance with the *Local Government Act 1989*. As a local government authority, Greater Shepparton City Council exercises a wide range of government functions and powers for the 'peace, order and good government' of our municipal district. Greater Shepparton City Council is one of the largest regional Councils within Victoria and strives to achieve our community's vision of a 'Greater Shepparton'.

As a local government authority we protect and strengthen Greater Shepparton's economic prosperity and the health, wellbeing and safety of our residents. We endeavour to plan and build a connected regional community which is safe, easy to navigate and provides a healthy and prosperous lifestyle, now and into the future. We are committed to making a difference in our community and creating a Greater Shepparton that provides access to world class educational and employment opportunities and health and wellbeing facilities for all.

Of Council's 925 staff, 168 completed the Diversity survey in April 2017, five staff members identified as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander, although Council believes the number of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander staff is higher with some staff choosing not to disclose. Council also now employs an Aboriginal Employment Officer on a part time basis, whose role is the deliverables associated with the Algabonyah Agreement (refer to page 40).



BACKGROUND

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples have lived on the Australian continent for more than 50,000 years.ⁱ It is now understood there were over 500 different clan groups or 'nations' and that these peoples were dispersed throughout the continent.ⁱⁱ Their cultural life was rich and strongly connected with the land. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples managed the land, had strong agricultural and environmental practices, strong identities and cultures, and hierarchical systems.ⁱⁱⁱ However, with the arrival of the British in 1788, intent on colonising this land, the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples' traditional patterns of life were irretrievably altered.

The richness of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures was largely unrecognised by the British Colonial government and this presumption had stark consequences for the original inhabitants. The most obvious impact was the marked reduction of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population. This happened directly through the introduction of European diseases, for which there was no immunity, and many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples were killed by settlers who saw them as a threat to their agricultural enterprises.^{iv} However, perhaps the most insidious, and an action that still resonates today, was the destruction of their cultural traditions through disenfranchisement and the loss of their rights to their own lands. Initially this occurred when many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples were gathered into Protectorates with little regard to their Traditional Clan Groups; children were removed from their families and cultural practices were not supported.^v Later it occurred through the development of Government policies where Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples were given a European education and were taught European cultural practices.

Despite the catastrophic effects of colonisation, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples have survived.

Since European arrival Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples made significant contributions to the local economy and prosperity of the area. History has often overlooked these contributions; however, this attitude is changing and a number of legislative changes have pegged this progress, including:

- The Referendum of 1967 changed the Constitution to include Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples in population determinations and empowered the federal government to legislate specifically for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples.
- The Aboriginal Land Rights (Northern Territory) Act 1976 legally recognised Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples' systems of land ownership and put into law the concept of inalienable freehold title.
- The decision by the High Court of Australia (known as the Eddie Mabo decision) which overturned the legal doctrine of terra nullius.

These three legislative actions have given support for further changes. For the Shepparton region, it has given Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples' communities a better representation through the Victorian State Government's Aboriginal Heritage Act (2006). The Yorta Yorta Nation Aboriginal Corporation is recognised as the Registered Aboriginal Party for the land comprising the City of Greater Shepparton and was established to represent the eight clan groups of the Yorta Yorta Nation. Registered Aboriginal Parties, or Traditional Owners as they are commonly known, have important roles and functions in managing and protecting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples' cultural heritage.^{vi} All cultural requests such as Welcomes to Country, land development information and cultural guidance must first be directed to these Registered Aboriginal Parties.^{vii}



Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples' communities in Shepparton have maintained strong cultural identities. Today, Greater Shepparton has many places and features that have significant Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural heritage and is amongst the most culturally diverse municipalities in regional Victoria. Historically, the majority of the municipality was included in the Yorta Yorta Nation with eight clans occupying Greater Shepparton and surrounding areas including: Bangerang, Kalitheban, Wollithiga, Moira, Ulupna, Kwat Kwat, Yalaba Yalaba and Nguaria-illiam-wurrung; all of which spoke the Yorta Yorta language or a similar dialect

Around 1.6% of people in Greater Shepparton identify as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander People in the Australian Bureau of Statistics Census (2016). However, anecdotal evidence shows that this is an underrepresentation, and Greater Shepparton's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population is actually almost three times this with a population of nearly 6,000. This makes this region one of the largest Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander populated areas outside of metropolitan Melbourne.

The environment was, and remains, extremely important to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples and is central to their cultures. In the local area, the rivers are of major significance to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples, and have influenced their cultures and histories. The Broken River, the Kaiela^{viii} (Goulburn River), and the Dungala^{ix} (Murray River) are of particular significance and have sustained Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples for thousands of years.

"Greater Shepparton Local Government Area has 567 registered cultural heritage places including Aboriginal historical places, burials, artefact scatters, earth features, low density artefact distributions, object collections, a quarry, scarred trees and shell middens."^x

Places of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples' cultural heritage significance locally include Cummeragunja, Maloga, Barmah, The Flats, Hill 60, Howe's Paddock, Daish's Paddock, Murchison Historical Aboriginal Graves, Murchison Protectorate Station, the Bangerang Cultural Centre, Undera Sand Hill (Burial Place) and Rumbalara Aboriginal Cooperative.





GUIDING DOCUMENTS

Council considered a number of key documents and policy statements to provide context and help guide the development of the Reconciliation Action Plan:

- The Uluru Statement from the Heart
- The United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights
- The Victorian Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006

Uluru Statement from the Heart

The 2017 First Nations National Constitutional Convention resulted in the release of the ‘Uluru Statement from the Heart’^{xii} and the Final Report of the Referendum Council.^{xiii}

The Uluru Statement from the Heart called for substantive constitutional change and structural reform, and sought a Makarrata Commission to “...supervise a process of agreement making between governments and First Nations and truth telling about our history.” The full text of the Uluru Statement from the Heart can be found in Appendix one.

The Final Report of the Referendum Council had two key recommendations. These can be found in Appendix two.

The Australian Government considered the Referendum Council’s call to amend the Constitution to provide for a national Indigenous representative assembly to constitute a Voice to Parliament. The Australian Government rejected this call. The reasons for this rejection can be found in Appendix three.

The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples

“The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples was adopted by the General Assembly on Thursday, 13 September 2007.

It establishes a universal framework of minimum standards for the survival, dignity and well-being of the indigenous peoples of the world and it elaborates on existing human rights standards and fundamental freedoms as they apply to the specific situation of indigenous peoples.”^{xiii}

Australia officially adopted the declaration in April 2009.

See Appendix four for the specific and relevant Articles 18 and 19 of the Declaration.

The Victorian Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006

“The Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006 (the Charter) is a Victorian law that sets out the basic rights, freedoms and responsibilities of all people in Victoria. It is about the relationship between government and the people it serves.

The Charter requires public authorities, such as Victorian state and local government departments and agencies, and people delivering services on behalf of government, to act consistently with the human rights in the Charter.”^{xiv}

Section 19 of the Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006 references Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples – see Appendix five for the text of Section 19.





TIMELINE AND TRUTH TELLING^{xv}

As part of the truth telling of our shared histories, it is important the historical events that have impacted upon Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples are acknowledged. It is equally important to acknowledge these events have ongoing consequences and are still painful to many.

Whilst outlining dates of significance is integral to enable the truth telling of our shared histories, it is important to recognise the way in which Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples record histories varies between clans and is sometimes different to westerners.

50,000 years and prior

For more than 50,000 years “Aboriginal people inhabited the whole of Australia and Torres Strait Islanders lived on the islands between Australia and Papua New Guinea, in what is now called the Torres Strait.”^{xvi}

As Bruce Pascoe, author of *‘Dark Emu Black Seeds: agriculture or accident?’*, will confirm Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples managed the landscape and protected the land. “...Aboriginal People *did* build houses, *did* build dams, *did* sow, irrigate and till the land, *did* alter the course of rivers, *did* sew their clothes, and *did* construct a system of pan-continental government that generated peace and prosperity...”^{xvii}

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples had systems of society, economies of trade, languages, systems of government and law, and built housing and shelter. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples cared for the environment - not only did they know its rhythms and idiosyncrasies; they sowed seed, harvested, and stored the results of their agricultural labours. They managed the environment with fire, and ensured sustainability and regeneration. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples built dams and weirs, and fished. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples to this day retain and share this knowledge as part of culture^{xviii}.

Instead of acknowledging and appreciating Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples, it suited the colonists - and their desire to pioneer a ‘new land’ - to see Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples as nomadic, with no sense of land ownership or management.

In one short century, during the 1800s, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples’ histories were cast aside. In more direct language, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples’ communities were persecuted by invasion, murder, rape, and confinement to settlements.

The long perpetuated notion of aimless, uncultured, and ignorant Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples is simply untrue and must be challenged.

This is why truth telling is vital to reconciliation and must form part of this Plan’s timeline.



ARTIST'S PROFILE

Tammy-Lee Atkinson

Tammy-Lee Atkinson is a proud Yorta-Yorta woman and artist. She was born in Echuca but raised in Cummeragunja, Barmah and Kerang and now lives in Mooroopna. Tammy-Lee completed her Bachelor of Visual Arts at IKE at Deakin University in Geelong and is now a consistent contributor to Kaiela Arts.



Her distinctive style of painting, drawing and printmaking convey a contemporary expression of her love of culture and Tammy's artworks now grace many local offices and homes in the Region. Having the ability to express her story through all mediums of art is important to Tammy as a method of conveying a story or message.

Not only is Tammy's output of art amazing but her capacity to take on a challenge and run with it has allowed her to develop creative ways to facilitate groups through art. Working with children, youth or Elders, Tammy is regarded as a trusted and capable facilitator who brings out the best in those who may not have the courage to extend themselves creatively.

Growing up admiring her grandmother's artwork from emu egg carving and feather flowers, being surrounded by art she has always had a natural passion for art. Painting and drawing has always been a hobby for Tammy-Lee for most of her life, being able to express herself through art has made her grounded. Art was always an escape from life.

Growing up in Mooroopna she has had many opportunities through art and design to help different Aboriginal organisation's with newsletters, photography and promotional items. In her spare time, she continues to help Aboriginal families in designing posters, photos, funeral booklets, birthday invites and shirts. She is a self-taught artist.

*Right:
Serenity*

Council commissioned Tammy-Lee Atkinson to provide a visual interpretation of the time before white invasion to what is now known as Australia. Tammy's interpretation of this time is titled 'Serenity'. Tammy used paint and sand to create the piece.

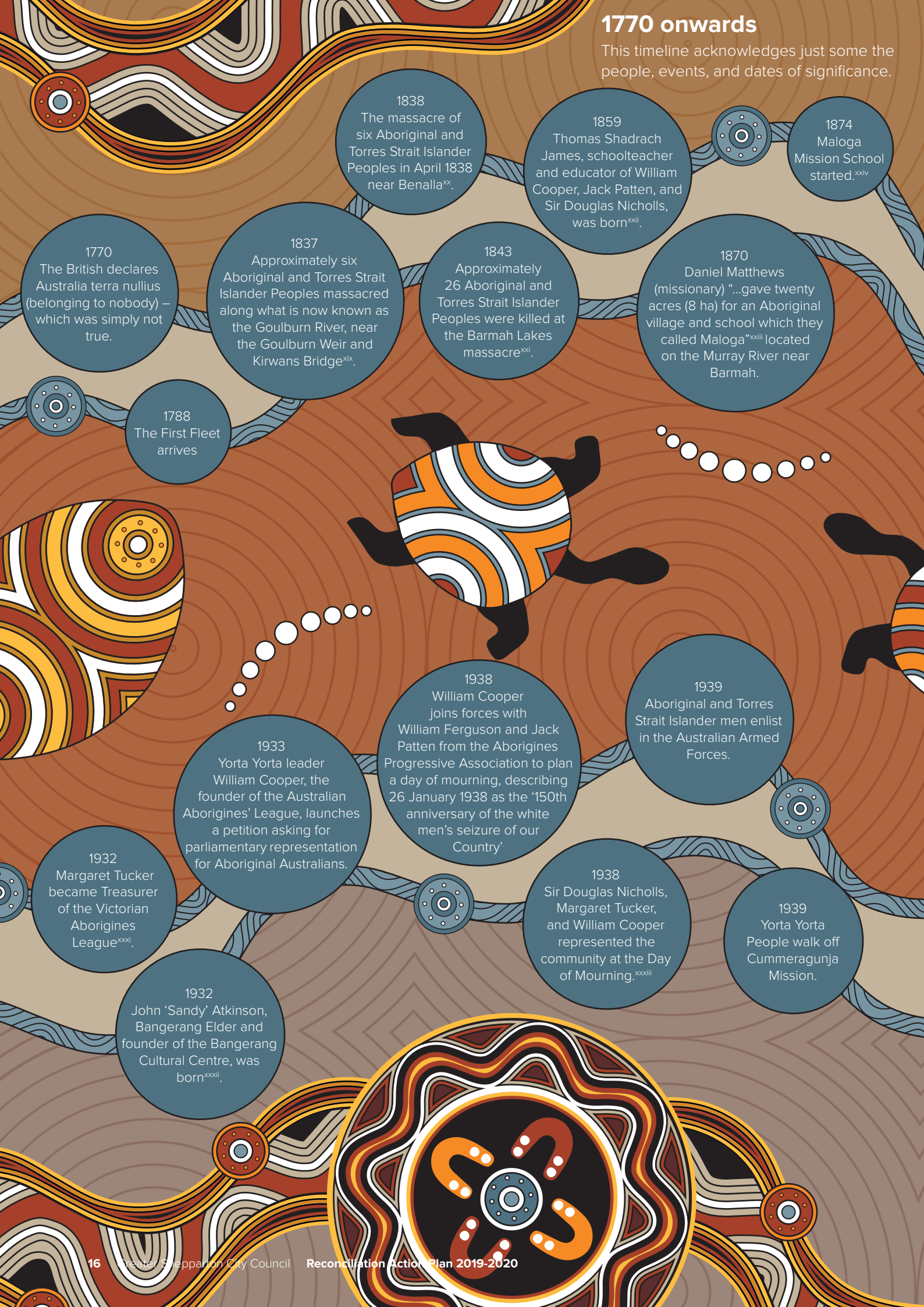
©Tammy Lee Atkinson/Copyright Agency, 2019.





1770 onwards

This timeline acknowledges just some the people, events, and dates of significance.





1881
New South Wales
Aborigines Protection
Association
established.^{xxv}

1890
Shadrach
Livingstone
James, Aboriginal
Activist, was
born.^{xxvii}

1888
Cummeragunja
Mission Station
founded.^{xxvi}

1905
Jack Patten,
Aboriginal Leader and
Aborigines Progressive
Association President,
was born.^{xxviii}

1910
Geraldine Briggs AO,
human rights campaigner
and founding member
of the United Council of
Aboriginal Women, was
born.^{xxx}

1915
Aboriginal and
Torres Strait Islander
men enlist in the
Australian Armed
Forces.

1901
Commonwealth
of Australia
formed.

1906
Sir Douglas Ralph
Nicholls born at
Cummeragunja.^{xxix}

1940
Sir Douglas Nicholls
became secretary of the
Australian Aborigines'
League.^{xxxiv}

1941
William Cooper
passed away on
29 March 1941.^{xxxv}

1946
Aboriginal and
Torres Strait Islander
pastoral workers walk
off stations in the
Pilbara region. The
strike lasts until
1949.

1946
The All Blacks
football team won the
Central Goulburn Valley
League's second
division grand
final.^{xxxvi}

1947
All Blacks football
team dropped from
the Central Goulburn
Valley League.^{xxxvii}

1954
Queen Elizabeth II visits
Australia to welcoming
crowds. Aboriginal and Torres
Strait Islander Peoples' camp
sites in country towns are
shielded from her view –
including in Shepparton/
Mooroopna.

1957
Sir Douglas
Nicholls formed the
Victorian Aborigines
Advancement League
with Doris Blackburn
and Gordon
Bryant.^{xxxviii}

1957
Sir Douglas
Nicholls appointed
MBE (Member of the
Order of the British
Empire).^{xxxix}

1958
Rumbalara
Housing Settlement
created by Deputy
Premier, Arthur
Gordon Rylah.^{xl}



1962
Aboriginal and
Torres Strait Islander
Peoples are able
to vote in federal
elections

1962
The Federal
Council for Aboriginal
Advancement (FCAA)
launches national campaign
for a referendum
to change the
Constitution.

1964
Margaret
Tucker became the
first Aboriginal and
Torres Strait Islander
woman to be appointed
to the Victorian
Aboriginal Welfare
Board^{xlii}.

1967
An overwhelming majority
(90.77%) of Australians
vote to amend the Australian
Constitution to include Aboriginal
Peoples in the census, and to give
federal Parliament the power
to make laws in relation to
Aboriginal and Torres Strait
Islander Peoples.

1968
Margaret Tucker
became the first
Aboriginal and Torres Strait
Islander woman to join the
Commonwealth's Ministry of
Aboriginal Affairs^{xliii}.

1968
Sir Douglas Nicholls
received an OBE
(Order of the British
Empire)^{xliii}.

1988
Sir Douglas
Nicholls passed
away.^{xlviii}

1991
Royal
Commission
into Aboriginal
Deaths in Custody
releases its final
report.

1992
Australian High
Court hands
down the Mabo
decision.

1993
International
Year of
the World's
Indigenous
People.

1994
The Yorta Yorta
people lodged a
native title claim for
recognition of their
native title rights. The
claim was rejected.
^{xlix}

1997
Bringing them
Home Report
launched.

1998
The Rumbalara
Football Netball
Club won their first
premiership in Division
Two of the Goulburn
Valley Football
League.ⁱ

1998
First National
Sorry Day held.

2007
Yorta Yorta Nation
Aboriginal Corporation
registered as A
Registered Aboriginal
Party on 14 September
2007.

1770 onwards (cont)

1968

The Federal Council for the Advancement of Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders (FCAATSI) decides to launch a national campaign for Aboriginal land rights.

1972

Sir Douglas Nicholls was knighted for distinguished services to the advancement of Aboriginal Peoples.^{xliv}

1976

Sir Douglas Nicholls appointed Governor of South Australia.^{xlv}

1982

The Bangerang Cultural Centre opened.^{xlvi}

1985

Uluru handed back to its Traditional Owners.

1975

The Australian Government passes the Racial Discrimination Act.

1972

The Aboriginal Tent Embassy is pitched at Parliament House Canberra as part of the campaign for Aboriginal land rights.

1980

Rumbalara Aboriginal Co-operative established.

1983

Title deeds to Cummeragunja returned to the Yorta Yorta people.^{xlvii}

1988

The Burunga Statement is presented to the then Prime Minister Bob Hawke.

2009

First Apology Day breakfast held in Shepparton to mark the anniversary of Kevin Rudd's apology to the Stolen Generations.

2010

Pecan Summer - an opera written, composed, directed, and performed by Deborah Cheetham - premiered in Mooroopna.

2017

Lydia Thorpe became the first Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander woman elected to Victorian Parliament as the Member for Northcote.

2009

Australia supports the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People - Australia previously voted against this declaration.

2017

Mungo Man returns home.

2018

Victorian Treaty Commission introduced.

2008

Prime Minister Kevin Rudd apologises to the Stolen Generations.

2018

Fifth star of the Southern Cross now recognised by its Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples' (Wardaman) name - 'Ginan'. Three other stars now also known by their Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples' names: Wurru, Larawag, and Unurgunite.



OUR COMMITMENT TO RECONCILIATION

Through the development and implementation of this plan, Greater Shepparton City Council continues to Respect, Acknowledge and Partner with the communities of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples.

Council:

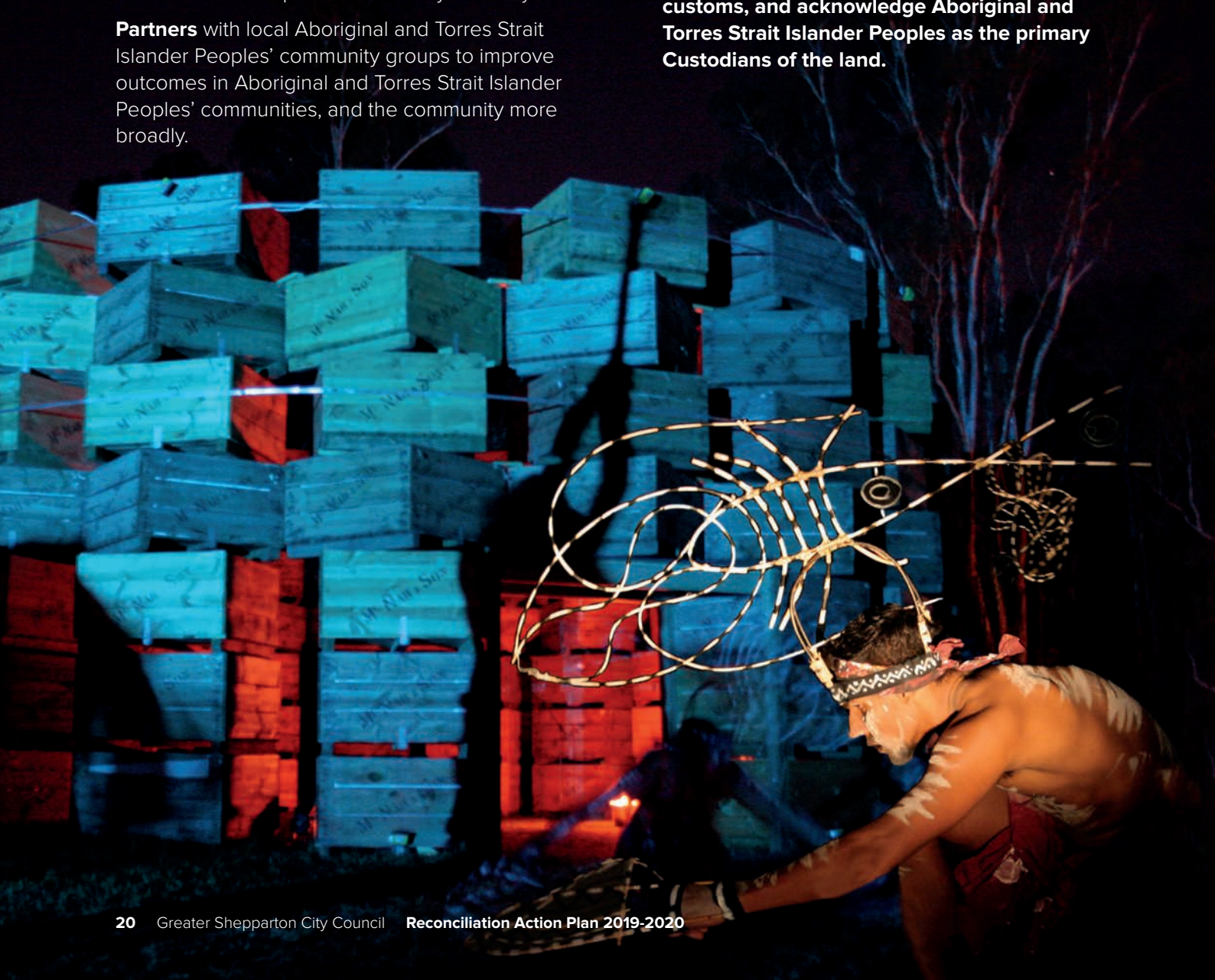
Respects Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples as the Traditional Owners of the land, and their knowledge and caring for Country.

Acknowledges the place Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples hold in today's society.

Partners with local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples' community groups to improve outcomes in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples' communities, and the community more broadly.

Greater Shepparton City Council

- **Acknowledges and pays respect to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples as the Traditional Owners of the land past and present.**
- **Actively supports and promotes reconciliation and reconnection of all of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples within the municipality.**
- **Respect and celebrate Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples' traditions and customs, and acknowledge Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples as the primary Custodians of the land.**





OUR VISION FOR RECONCILIATION

Council acknowledge the disparities and inequities faced by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples both past and present, and seek to demonstrate organisational leadership on the journey of reconciliation.

Council's vision for reconciliation:

A future where Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples have equitable access, inclusion and opportunities, and where Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples' cultures are honoured and respected.

When striving for the attainment of this vision, Council believes its actions should be underpinned by the Five Dimensions of Reconciliation in Australia, as outlined in Reconciliation Australia's 'The State of Reconciliation in Australia' Report:

- Race Relations
- Equality and Equity
- Unity
- Institutional Integrity
- Historical Acceptance

WHY A RECONCILIATION ACTION PLAN?

Greater Shepparton City Council sought to develop a Reconciliation Action Plan to build and develop meaningful and collaborative relationships between Council and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples' communities for the benefit of all of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples and the broader community.

Council strives to provide leadership to the broader community through the acknowledgement and celebration of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples, cultures, and their significance to the land and our community as Australia's First Peoples.

This Reconciliation Action Plan is a capacity-building plan, by which Council can build its competencies in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples' affairs, and act strategically beyond current commitments and activities with increased confidence, sensitivity, and higher skill level. The Plan builds on current activities and existing relationships to provide a basic framework for further learning, dialogue and action.

The Reconciliation Action Plan underpins the commitment from Council to work with communities of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples on an agreed set of actions that will demonstrate respect, build relationships and provide opportunities.



THE JOURNEY SO FAR

The Greater Shepparton City Council Local Government Area has long been home for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples. Council values and acknowledges Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples and their contribution to our community. This belief is underpinned by the Greater Shepparton City Council Plan 2017-2021, of which Objective 2.8 states:

“...Aboriginal culture and people are valued and celebrated, with collaborative actions undertaken to enable peaceful, healthy and productive lives in a safe environment.”

In February 2015 Councillors approved a recommendation at a Council briefing to commence the development of a document, such as a Reconciliation Action Plan, to further develop meaningful and collaborative relationships between Council and the communities of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples. The aim of such a plan is to improve outcomes for the community and progress addressing some of the disparities that currently exist.

It was envisaged the plan would be underpinned by a commitment from Council to work with the communities of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples on an agreed set of actions that demonstrate respect, build relationships and provide opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples’ communities.

Council is proud to be a signatory to the Algabonyah Agreement, which details Council’s commitment to ensure Council has 2% Aboriginal employment by 2020, and has employed an Aboriginal Employment Officer to drive this work.

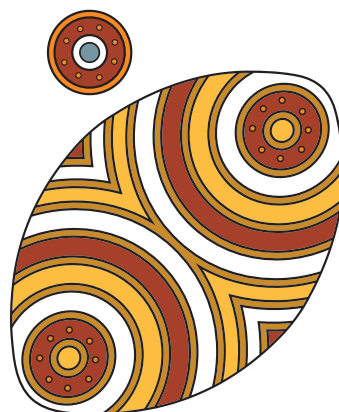
Council employs a number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff across all directorates, and has a number of identified positions for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples in the areas of:

- Works and Waste
- SAM (Shepparton Art Museum) Internships and program staff
- Active Living
- People and Development
- Children and Youth

Council’s commitment to the communities of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples has resulted in partnerships with organisations and groups external to Council, as well as programs within the organisation that aim to engage, acknowledge, and celebrate Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples and heritage.

Council is an active member of the Shepparton Region Reconciliation Group and has partnered with them to deliver a variety of activities and initiatives including an annual Apology Day Breakfast, activities for National Reconciliation Week, and acknowledgement of Sorry Day.

Council has examined internal policies and procedures, as well as strategic planning documents, to ensure continuous and ongoing consideration of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples across all Directorates and Council services.





Council's organisational structure has four directorates; Corporate Services, Infrastructure, Sustainable Development, and Community. These directorates have delivered individual projects and targeted services designed to build relationships with the communities of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples and ensure wider appreciation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples' cultures. Some of these projects include:

- RiverConnect
- The Aboriginal Street Art Project
- Support of ASHEFest
- Targeted service provision. For example: Immunisation services at Rumbalara, and the provision of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples' resources for kindergartens and childcare centres
- Support of the Unity Cup
- Converge on the Goulburn
- Cultural Diversity Week
- SAM (Shepparton Art Museum)
- Support and promotion of a number of awards including the Dungala-Kaiela Writing Award and the Indigenous Ceramic Art Award (biannual)





PROCESS OF DEVELOPING THE RECONCILIATION ACTION PLAN

How did Council develop the Reconciliation Action Plan?

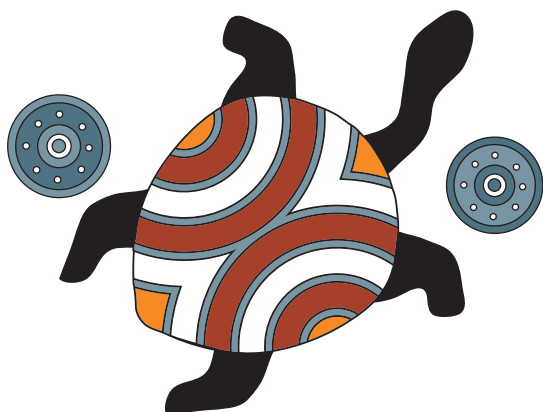
Council committed to ensuring the Reconciliation Action Plan was developed in an effective, considered, and consultative manner.

Council abided by the guidelines, and utilised the expertise of Reconciliation Australia when developing the plan.

An initial decision was made to develop a 'Reflect' Reconciliation Action Plan, as this was appropriate given the progress of Council on the journey of reconciliation.

A Working Group was established, consisting of Council staff from each directorate. Membership was selected based on the role function, expertise, and their ability to instigate change. The following are members of the Working Group:

- Communications Officer
- Community Development Coordinator
- Director – Community
- Director – Infrastructure
- Early Years Services Coordinator
- Manager – People and Development
- Manager Corporate Governance
- Manager Marketing and Communications
- Manager Neighbourhoods
- Municipal Health Project Officer
- Principal Strategic Planner
- Project Administration Officer
- Shepparton Art Museum Director
- Team Leader – Business and Industry Development
- Team Leader – Community Strengthening
- Team Leader – Strategic Planning
- Team Leader – Sustainability and Environment
- Team Leader – Children's Services
- Team Leader – Customer Service
- Team Leader – Healthy Communities





Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff representation on the Working Group was also sought, and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples' community organisations were approached for feedback and to review as appropriate.

Staff workshops were utilised to obtain the input of the broader Council staff. These were open to all staff of Council, with some targeted workshops undertaken.

Information regarding progress of the development of the Reconciliation Action Plan was provided to all staff through a range of methods, including all staff meetings, staff newsletters, and the internal Council website.

The Reconciliation Action Plan was developed to focus on existing activities of Council as well as direct future activities relating to the communities of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples. In order to best capture the activities already being undertaken by Council, an audit of current projects/programs was undertaken.

Governance and reporting

To achieve endorsement from the Council the Reconciliation Action Plan was approved at the following levels:







OUR WORK

Council partners with organisations and groups through a range of partnership platforms. A number of these partnerships are essential to the delivery of this Plan and key activities that improve outcomes for our community. Some of these partnerships and activities are detailed below.

Core Partnerships

Shepparton Region Reconciliation Group

Council is a member of the Shepparton Region Reconciliation Group. The Shepparton Region Reconciliation Group's purpose is to "...further reconciliation between the local Indigenous and non-Indigenous members of the region. (Their) purposes are in accord with Reconciliation Victoria, to work toward rights, respect and recognition for the local Indigenous community."^{lii}

Activities delivered by the Shepparton Region Reconciliation Group in conjunction with Council include: National Apology Day, National Sorry Day, and National Reconciliation Week.

Yorta Yorta Nation Aboriginal Co-operative

"The Yorta Yorta Nation Aboriginal Corporation (YYNAC) is comprised of peoples with undeniable bloodlines to the Original Ancestors of the Land of the Yorta Yorta Nation. These bloodlines link Yorta Yorta peoples' past, present and future to one another, with traditional laws, customs, beliefs and sovereignty intact.

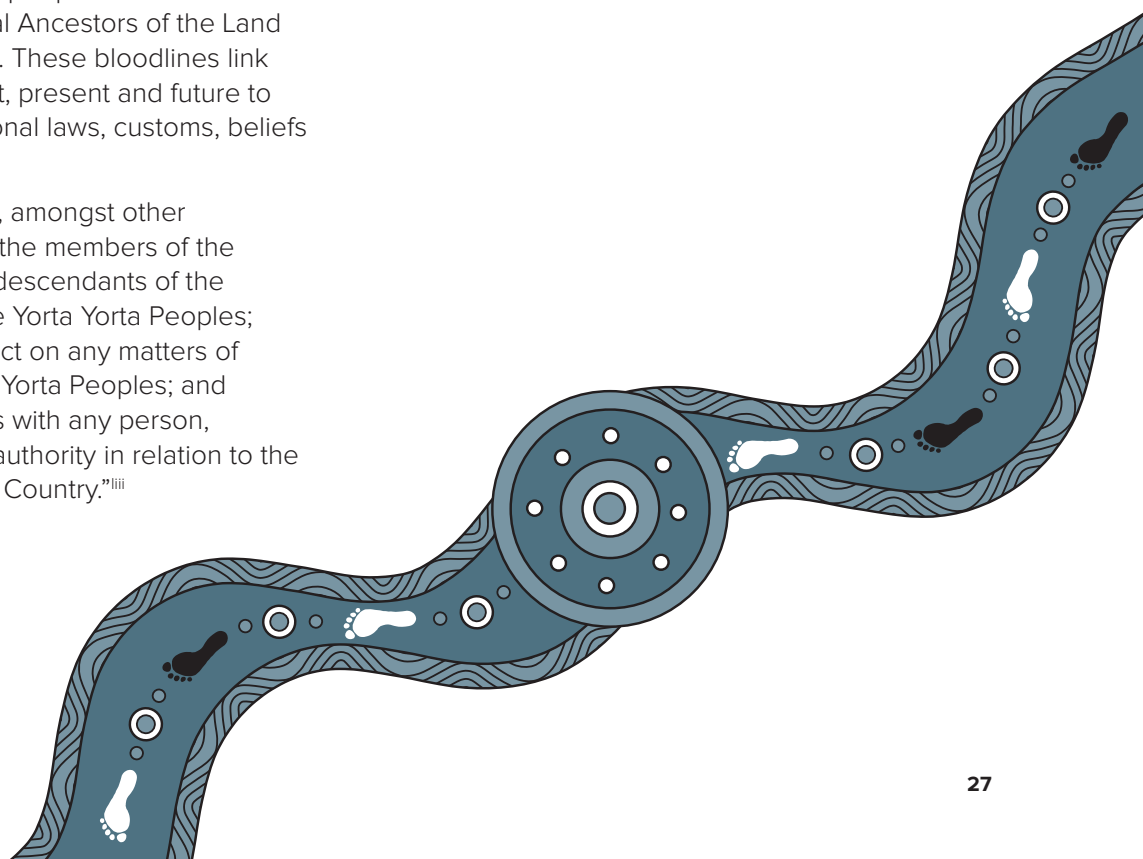
YYNAC was established, amongst other objectives, to represent the members of the Family Groups who are descendants of the Original Ancestors of the Yorta Yorta Peoples; to make decisions and act on any matters of significance to the Yorta Yorta Peoples; and to enter into agreements with any person, Government agency or authority in relation to the protection of Yorta Yorta Country."^{liii}

YYNAC are the Registered Aboriginal Party for the Greater Shepparton Local Government area. Council engages YYNAC for the provision of Welcome to Country ceremonies. Council also partners with YYNAC to identify possible projects/ activities that will advocate for, or lead to, better outcomes.

Broader Partnerships

Council works with a number of organisations in varying capacities to support their work and local activities including, but not limited to:

- Academy of Sport Health and Education (ASHE)
- Bangerang Cultural Centre
- Dungala Kaiela Foundation
- Ganbina
- Kaiela Arts
- Kaiela Institute
- Rumbalara Aboriginal Co-operative
- Rumbalara Football Netball Club





In 2016, Greater Shepparton City Council came up with an idea to celebrate local Aboriginal people and their culture through street art.





Key Council initiatives

Council is proud to partner to deliver various initiatives that contribute to reconciliation and improve outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples in our community. Some of these projects are listed below.

Dana Djirrungana Dunguludja Yenbena-l (Proud, Strong Aboriginal People) – Aboriginal Street Art

In 2016, Greater Shepparton City Council initiated a project to celebrate local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples, their cultures and their contribution to Community through street art. Council, in discussion with the local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples' communities, noticed an interest amongst the locals in recognising significant figures who are not currently recognised within the region. After consultation with Rumbalara Aboriginal Co-operative, Yorta Yorta Nation Aboriginal Corporation, Gallery Kaiela and Goulburn Valley Water a mural was painted featuring the significant Elders Uncle William Cooper and Pastor Sir Douglas Nicholls.

"I think it's about time they were recognised for what they did for their people." Alf Turner, William Cooper's grandson.^{lv}

It's "another milestone for the recognition of Indigenous Peoples in the area." Bobby Nicholls, Sir Douglas Nicholls' nephew.^{lv}

"It's just wonderful to look at these two warriors on the wall." Pam Pedersen, Sir Douglas Nicholls' daughter.^{lvi}

The second stage of the project is a mural which features two Yorta Yorta females selected by the local community; Margaret Tucker and Nora Charles.

"Nanny Nora Charles and Auntie Marge Tucker were outstanding individuals who the local Aboriginal community are all very proud of."
Justin Mohammed.^{lvii}

"I think the mural is beautiful, when I look at it I can hear her voice and I'm glad I've had the chance to actually see this." Narjiic DayBurns, Great Grandson of Auntie Margaret Tucker.^{lviii}

A separate mural dedicated to local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples who have represented Australia in war was also developed as part of stage 2 of the Aboriginal Street Art Project. The mural features Private Daniel Cooper, a Yorta Yorta man who fought for Australia during World War I. Private Cooper died on the battlefield.

Private Cooper was the son of Uncle William Cooper who has been recognised as part of Stage 1 of the Shepparton Street Art Project, and with a statue located in the Shepparton Queen's Gardens.

"It means a lot to us; this happening in the place I live makes me and my family very pleased." Alf Turner, Private Cooper's nephew.^{lix}

"It's something that needed to be done. It's great that we're now recognising the Aboriginal servicemen that went to war." Leonie Drummond.^{lx}

In 2018, the Aboriginal Street Art project was awarded a HART Award in the Local Government category.



Arts programming at Riverlinks

Riverlinks is Greater Shepparton's link to performing arts and live entertainment. Riverlinks provides programming, venues, and ticketing for performing arts.

As part of their programming, Riverlinks ensure Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples' companies are engaged to deliver programming and workshops. Examples of such programming include:

- Bangarra Dance Theatre – 2011 and 2017
- Ilbijerri Theatre Company – 2017 and 2018
- The Tiwi Island RnB group, B2M, performed in November 2018.

These companies have provided workshops and/or information sessions for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples and non- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander participants.







Arts programming at Shepparton Art Museum (SAM)

SAM (Shepparton Art Museum) is one of Australia's leading art museums located in Greater Shepparton and the North Central corridor of Victoria.

SAM presents a dynamic program of temporary exhibitions and Collection shows, designed to be locally relevant and engage with global contemporary ideas. Showcasing the work of leading Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander artists within this context is core to SAM's remit and focus. SAM's exhibition program and potential acquisitions reflect our continued ambition to showcase and represent gender, cultural and First Nations diversity.

Since the 1980s, SAM (previously the Shepparton Art Gallery) has presented and acquired the work of leading contemporary Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander artists.

In 2007, The Indigenous Ceramic Art Award (ICAA) was established, the first award to celebrate the rich and diverse use of ceramics by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander artists throughout Australia. SAM's biannual Acquisitive Award is of national significance and reputation. A major component of this award is the creation of professional development opportunities for local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander artists .

In partnership with Kaiela Arts, cultural development programs have been developed and presented. Funding provided by SAM has also supported the acquisition of equipment for Kaiela Arts.

The major cultural bequest by Carrillo and Ziyin Gantner of their Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples' art collection has enabled SAM to review its collection focus through acquisitions of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples' art.

SAM redevelopment

On 19 May 2015, Councillors endorsed the recommendations of a report on the progression of a new Shepparton Art Museum. The project is included in Council's long term financial plan and strategic resource.

The new \$47.4million (Stage 1) SAM is to be a stand-alone, purpose built iconic building where Aboriginality will be implemented into the fabric of the building. The new SAM will be located next to the lake and wetlands, overlooking the forest at the southern entrance to Shepparton. The Visitor Information Centre and Kaiela Arts, Shepparton's Aboriginal Arts Centre, will be co-located in the new SAM. The new SAM is being designed to celebrate and bring our communities together through arts and culture in its broadest sense: to engage, be inspired, get informed, and just have fun through arts and culture.

Part of our activities at SAM as we transition and move to the new Museum is in supporting professional development opportunities for students and young adults keen to develop skills working in the arts and cultural sector. In 2016, we offered a one year Curatorial Assistant Indigenous Residency in partnership with Creative Victoria. A one year Learning and engagement partnership with the University of Melbourne has enabled us to extend this position for a further year.

SAM continues to partner with key organisations including Kaiela Arts, ASHE, Rumbalara Netball/Football Club, and Yorta Yorta Nation.

Left:

Vera Cooper, MORNING SUNRISE, 2006.

Ceramic and slip stains.

Shepparton Art Museum, purchased, 2006.

Courtesy and © the artist.

Image: Jamie Durrant

Vera Cooper is a Yorta Yorta woman based in Echuca. Her work has featured in the SAM Indigenous Ceramic Art Award.



CEO exchanges

Council has participated in CEO exchanges with the Kaiela Institute and Rumbalara Aboriginal Co-operative. The CEO exchange enables positions to be swapped for a day to gain a greater understanding of the unique challenges that each organisation experiences. These CEO exchanges continue the aim of enhancing the working relationship between Greater Shepparton organisations and for staff at all levels to feel free to compare work practices, learn from each other and share ideas.



Munarra Centre for Regional Excellence

The Munarra Centre for Regional Excellence (MCRE) will be a national, state-of-the-art centre designed as a hub of connection and transformation for young people across Australia. Comprising a campus for excellence in sports, health sciences and education, the MCRE is unique in that it embeds Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples' cultures across all curriculum and programs. The MCRE places Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples' leadership at the centre.

The MCRE will have:

- An Indigenous Academy with campus for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people from across the country.
- Specialist sports facilities and clinic
- Cultural facilities with opportunity for residency
- A flexible gallery and performance space
- A Welcome to Country hub
- An archive and centre to profile Yorta Yorta artefacts, history and culture
- A Yorta Yorta language centre

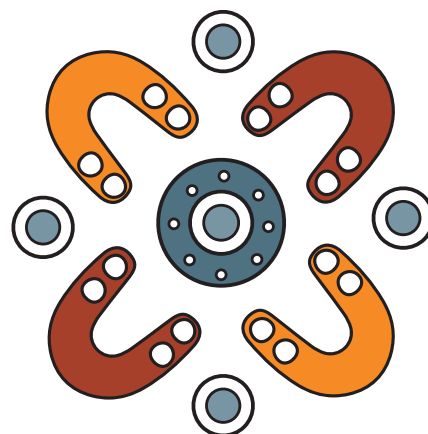
Council are working with relevant partners from community and key organisations for the planning of the MCRE.

RiverConnect

RiverConnect is a partnership project co-funded entirely by Greater Shepparton City Council and the Goulburn Broken Catchment Management Authority. The RiverConnect Strategic Plan 2017-2022 has the vision of connecting people, rivers and wetlands. A key component is the partnership with Yorta Yorta Nation Aboriginal Corporation and Rumbalara Aboriginal Co-operative.

One of the most rewarding outcomes of RiverConnect has been the development of The Flats signage and walks. This award winning project provides self-guided and guided tours along The Flats Walk for people to learn about a very small part of recent Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples' histories in the region.

Almost 4,000 people have been involved in RiverConnect events that include Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples' cultures and heritage components. There have also been a number of specific Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples' cultural events such as cooking, dance workshops and The Flats Walk.



The Flats

The Flats is a significant area located alongside the river between Shepparton and Mooroopna. The Flats became home to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples after the Cummeragunja Walk Off that occurred in 1939.

The Flats has cultural and historical significance and in 2013 interpretive signage was placed on site following extensive consultation with Yorta Yorta family members. The installation of the signage was a joint project between Yorta Yorta Nation Aboriginal Corporation, Council, RiverConnect, Goulburn Broken Catchment Management Authority, and Parks Victoria.

The interpretive signage depicts the history and events of significance that occurred at The Flats. Signage has been placed at intervals along the pathway that winds through The Flats, and highlights individuals who made a difference in the community both locally and nationally.

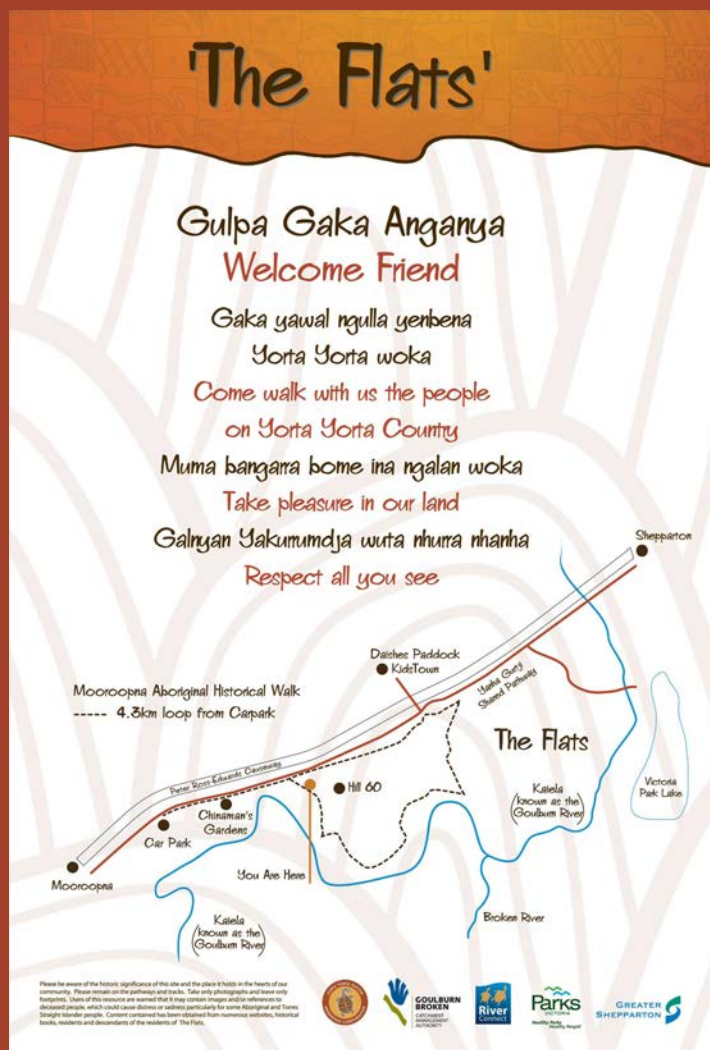
The installation of this signage enabled the creation of 'The Flats Walk' where local Aboriginal Elders walk with the community along the 4.3km path and talk about local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Heritage.

"Most of those who lived on The Flat remember life as a hard, but a happy time."^[xi]

In 2018 students from Wilmot Road Primary School approached Council to request the installation of directional signage to The Flats. This directional signage highlights the area of significance and was installed in conjunction with the Yorta Yorta Nation Aboriginal Corporation and Regional Roads Victoria in December 2018.

When requesting the directional signage, students from Wilmot Road Primary School spoke of their pride and the importance of such signs:

Bella said: "My Aboriginal People are important. That's why we need to put a sign up on the Causeway. I am a Yorta Yorta girl and I will be proud to see a sign up."



Farzana said: "If our town has signs to The Flats it will be a simple way to let people know about this historical place. A sign on how to get to The Flats will help visitors to our town to find out some cultural information about our local Indigenous People."

Mortada said: "A simple sign will promote harmony and be great for tourism..."

Isiah said: "A sign...will show that Greater Shepparton Council respects the local history and culture of my people."

It is anticipated the installation of the signage will assist in providing further opportunity for the Yorta Yorta Nation Aboriginal Corporation to open up The Flats for educational tourism – visiting dignitaries, local groups, and school students often walk The Flats.



Tourism

Guided by Council's Economic Development Tourism and Major Events Strategy 2017-2021 part of Council's focus is to promote local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples' cultures, arts, products and sites of significance in a respectful way. Council sees local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples' cultures and heritage as a primary strength of Greater Shepparton and wishes to encourage visitors and locals to acknowledge and celebrate Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and Peoples.

Council, in partnership with relevant stakeholders, continues to focus on incorporating Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples' cultures into the tourism experience for the Greater Shepparton region. Future projects include an increase in signage recognising significant sites and/or place names, and a festival to specifically celebrate local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples' cultures.

Celebrations

Council annually celebrates the cultures and heritage of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples in a variety of ways, including.

- Converge on the Goulburn (Formerly Emerge)
- Cultural Diversity Week
- Harmony Day
- NAIDOC Week

Acknowledgements

Council acknowledges dates of significance through funding, support, and/or hosting activities to mark:

- National Apology Day
- National Sorry Day
- National Reconciliation Week





ORGANISATIONAL PLANS, STRATEGIES, POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Council has undertaken work internally to improve policies, procedures, and strategies to ensure Council better understands the importance of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples' cultures, skills and heritage.

Council develops a myriad of plans and strategies that outline Council's priorities, directions, and services. The underpinning strategic document that outlines the direction of Council is the Greater Shepparton Council Plan 2017-2021.

Council Plan 2017-2021

The Council Plan details objectives to be achieved and guides decision making, priorities and the allocation of Council resources to deliver outcomes, services, and facilities for the community. Specific objectives in the Council Plan that relate to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples include:

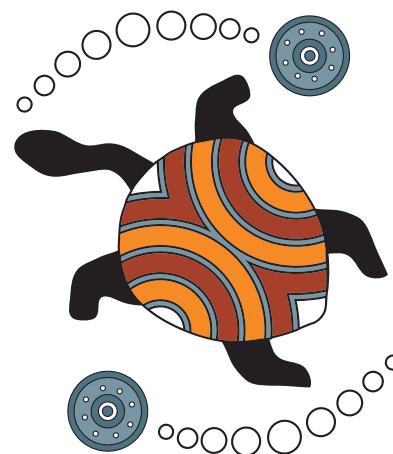
- 2.1 Greater Shepparton is a welcoming, inclusive and safe place for all.
- 2.2 Our community is supported to achieve and sustain physical, emotional and spiritual health and wellbeing.
- 2.7 Greater Shepparton is valued for cultural celebrations, inclusion and engagement of our diverse communities.
- 2.8 Aboriginal culture and people are valued and celebrated, with collaborative actions undertaken to enable peaceful, healthy and productive lives in a safe environment.

Strategies

There are a range of Departmental strategies and plans including:

- Greater Shepparton Best Start Early Years Plan
- RiverConnect Strategic Plan
- Cultural Diversity and Inclusion Strategy
- Greater Shepparton Economic Development, Tourism & Major Events Strategy 2017-2021
- Greater Shepparton Volunteer Strategy and Action Plan 2014-2018

Each of these plans articulate objectives and actions which are often interrelated, and contribute to better outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples.





Cultural competency training

Council offer staff a range of cultural competency awareness and training opportunities. These include Healing the Spirit Cultural Awareness training and a Cultural Awareness Bus Tour.

Healing the Spirit

Council has encouraged staff to undertake cultural competency training since 2014. This training was entitled 'Healing the Spirit' and was facilitated by local Yorta Yorta woman Robynne Nelson. More than 120 staff members attended Healing the Spirit training between 2014 and 2018. This training provided internal staff members and external community members with an overview of local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples' histories and protocols.

The Healing the Spirit training aims to build the organisation's capacity to engage with the local communities of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples. The success of this program has contributed toward the development of this Reconciliation Action Plan.

Council continues to offer this training as part of its regular training and development calendar.

Cultural Awareness Bus Tour

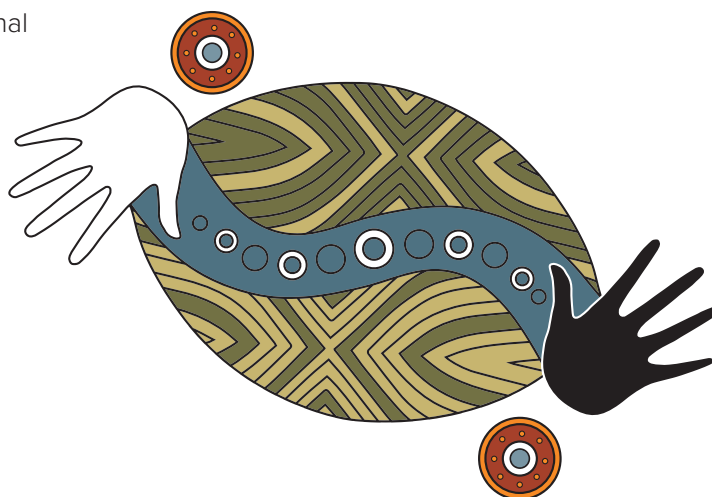
Since 2016 Council has offered staff cultural awareness training through a Cultural Bus Tour. This has allowed Council to tailor the training and learn about people in our community. The day includes visits to a variety of cultural or religiously significant places, cultural food and information from the communities about their cultures and religions. These include places of cultural significance and celebrate the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and multicultural communities of Greater Shepparton.

Heritage

A number of places of shared cultural heritage significance have been identified in heritage studies undertaken across the City of Greater Shepparton from 2001. The Murchison Historical Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples' Graves at Murchison Cemetery were identified in the *Greater Shepparton Heritage Study Stage II 2004* and included in the Heritage Overlay in 2004. The latest heritage study, the *Greater Shepparton Heritage Study Stage IIC 2017*, has identified the following places and recommended they also be included in the Heritage Overlay:

- Howe's Paddock, Mooroopna;
- Mooroopna Flats, Mooroopna;
- The 1958 houses at the Rumbalara Aboriginal Cooperative Site; and
- The Goulburn River Aboriginal Protectorate Station, Murchison.

The inclusion of these and further places in the Heritage Overlay will ensure that they are protected from adverse development proposals.





Policies/procedures

Council has a variety of policies and procedures designed to support the position of Council on a variety of topics and issues. Policies and procedures provide a clear outline for Council Officers and ensure consistency in Council's approach across a range of areas.

The following items are outlined in various Council policies and/or procedures.

Aboriginal Communications Guide

The Aboriginal Communications Guide provides a guide for employees of the Council looking to engage with the local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples' communities. At times there is confusion and uncertainty on engaging and consulting with the local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples' communities. The Aboriginal Communications Guide aims to give some culturally respectful guidance in reference to working with our local Traditional Owner group and the broader Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.

The Aboriginal Communications Guide includes areas relating to:

- Acknowledgement of Traditional Owners
- Welcome to Country
- Aboriginal Flag Raising Policy
- Entrance Flags





EMPLOYMENT

Algabonyah Agreement

Council is a signatory to the Algabonyah Agreement, which commits Council to increasing the proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples employed by the organisation to at least 2.0% by 2020, to achieve parity with our working-age population.

Council also employs an Aboriginal Employment Officer to assist Council to fulfil its commitments as a signatory to the Algabonyah Agreement.

ACTION PLAN

The Action Plan outlines actions and deliverables in line with the four pillars of:



Respect



Relationships



Opportunities



Governance and tracking progress

The Action Plan creates a clear template to outline the timing of, and responsibility for, each deliverable. It also outlines reporting and accountability, and ensures ongoing implementation of the plan, enabling rigour and transparency.



RELATIONSHIPS

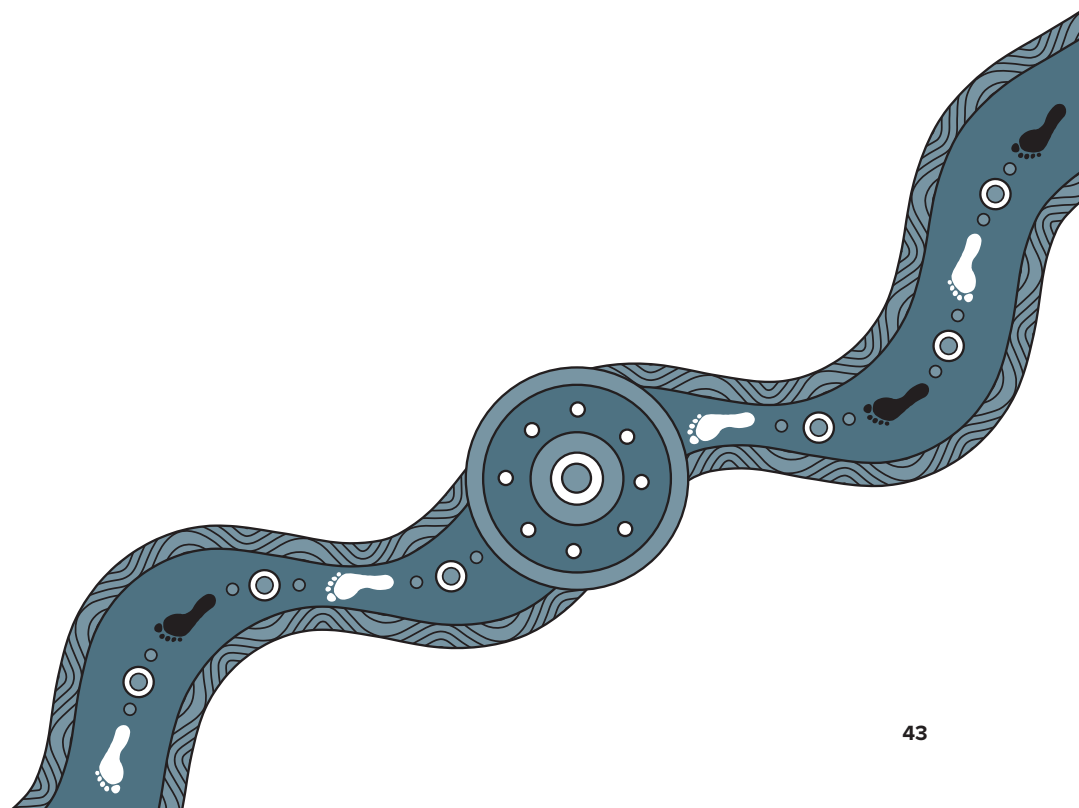
ACTION	DELIVERABLE	TIMELINE	RESPONSIBILITY
1. Establish a RAP Working Group	a) RAP Working Group to support the implementation of Council's RAP, comprising of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples and decision-making staff from across our organisation	July 2019	Team Leader - Community Strengthening
2. Build internal and external relationships	a) Continue to build on the relationships already forged with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples, communities and organisations through meetings with key groups such as Rumbalara, Yorta Yorta Nation Aboriginal Corporation, Kaiela Gallery, Shepparton Region Reconciliation Group, and ASHE	Ongoing To be tracked in July 2019 October 2019 February 2020 May 2020	Whole of Staff, led by Chief Executive Officer
	b) Develop a list of Australia's First Peoples, communities and organisations within our local area or sphere of influence that we could approach to connect with on our reconciliation journey	August 2019	Reconciliation Plan Working Group Chair
	c) Develop a list of RAP organisations and other like-minded organisations that we could approach to connect with on our reconciliation journey	August 2019	Reconciliation Plan Working Group Chair
	d) Continue the CEO Exchange program including a combined Executive meeting	Annually To be tracked in July 2019 October 2019 February 2020 May 2020	Chief Executive Officer
	e) Develop a communication framework for local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples' communities	June 2020	Manager Marketing and Communications



ACTION	DELIVERABLE	TIMELINE	RESPONSIBILITY
3. Participate in and celebrate National Reconciliation Week	a) Promote National Reconciliation Week activities to staff through internal Council website and internal newsletters	May 2020	Reconciliation Plan Working Group Chair
	b) Encourage staff to attend a National Reconciliation Week event	May 2020	Reconciliation Plan Working Group Chair
	c) Promote National Reconciliation Week through City of Greater Shepparton entrance flags	May 2020	Team Leader - Business and Industry Development
	d) Ensure Council's RAP Working Group participates in an external event to recognise and celebrate National Reconciliation Week	May 2020	Reconciliation Plan Working Group Chair
	e) RAP Working Group to plan two staff/internal events for National Reconciliation Week	May 2020	Reconciliation Plan Working Group Chair
	f) Develop a National Reconciliation Week feature for Insite and People and Development Newsletter	May 2020	Team Leader - Community Strengthening Manager - People and Development
	g) Circulate Reconciliation Australia's National Reconciliation Week resources and reconciliation materials to staff	May 2020	Reconciliation Plan Working Group Chair
4. Raise internal awareness of Council's RAP	a) Develop and implement a plan to raise awareness amongst all staff across the organisation about our RAP commitments through: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Manager meetings b. Senior Leadership Group c. Executive Leadership Team 	July 2019	Chief Executive Officer
	b) Develop and implement a plan to engage and inform key internal stakeholders of their responsibilities within our RAP	July 2019	Chief Executive Officer
	c) Engage our senior leaders in the delivery of RAP outcomes through Healing the Spirit Training, Councillor Briefings, Senior Leadership Group meetings and Executive Leadership Team meetings	Ongoing To be tracked in July 2019 October 2019 February 2020 May 2020	Chief Executive Officer



ACTION	DELIVERABLE	TIMELINE	RESPONSIBILITY
5. Support and promote projects that build relationships	a) Continue Shepparton Region Reconciliation Group partnership and participation	Ongoing To be tracked in July 2019 October 2019 February 2020 May 2020	Team Leader - Community Strengthening
	b) Continue to implement and promote the Aboriginal Street Art Project in collaboration with project partners	Ongoing To be tracked in July 2019 October 2019 February 2020 May 2020	Team Leader - Business and Industry Development
	c) Maintain and promote the William Cooper Memorial Statue	Ongoing To be tracked in July 2019 October 2019 February 2020 May 2020	Manager Parks, Sport and Recreation Team Leader - Community Strengthening
	d) Riverlinks Venues - maintain communication and relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples' cultural organisations (such as Bangarra Dance and Ilbijjerri Theatre Company) to enable the regular presentation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander performing arts productions in the local area	Ongoing To be tracked in July 2019 October 2019 February 2020 May 2020	Manager Riverlinks







RESPECT

ACTION	DELIVERABLE	TIMELINE	RESPONSIBILITY
6. Increase staff awareness of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples' cultures, histories, and achievements	a) Conduct a review of cultural awareness training needs within Council	December 2019	Manager - People and Development
	b) Continue to deliver the Cultural Awareness Bus Tour – available to all staff and Councillors	Ongoing To be tracked in July 2019 October 2019 February 2020 May 2020	Manager - People and Development Team Leader - Community Strengthening
	c) Develop, implement, and communicate a cultural learning strategy for our staff.	June 2020	Reconciliation Plan Working Group Chair
	d) Capture data and measure our staff's current level of knowledge and understanding of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, histories and achievements.	April 2020	Manager - People and Development
	e) Continue to provide Cultural Awareness training (about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples' histories, cultures, protocols) to Council staff (online and face to face)	Ongoing To be tracked in July 2019 October 2019 February 2020 May 2020	Manager - People and Development
	f) Provide specific targeted Cultural Awareness training (about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples' histories, cultures, protocols) to all Councillors, and Maternal and Child Health and all Children's Services Educators	October 2019	Manager - People and Development Team Leader - Children's Services
	g) Offer a range of other immersive/hands on cultural awareness training/learning opportunities that educate staff about: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Flats Walk history and significance • Symbols of local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples • Language of local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples • Food of Local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples • Traditional customs of Local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples 	Ongoing To be tracked in July 2019 October 2019 February 2020 May 2020	Manager – People and Development Team Leader – Community Strengthening Team Leader – Sustainability and Environment



ACTION	DELIVERABLE	TIMELINE	RESPONSIBILITY
	h) Encourage all staff to attend The Flats Walk	Ongoing To be tracked in July 2019 October 2019 February 2020 May 2020	Manager – People and Development Team Leader – Community Strengthening
	i) Provide cultural information at All Staff Meetings	Ongoing To be tracked in July 2019 October 2019 February 2020 May 2020	Reconciliation Plan Working Group Chair
	j) Encourage staff to use Reconciliation Australia's Share Our Pride online tool	Ongoing To be tracked in July 2019 October 2019 February 2020 May 2020	Reconciliation Plan Working Group Chair
7. Encourage cultural appreciation of the environment	a) Investigate opportunities to deepen our understanding of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples' connection to the environment, particularly in the RiverConnect area.	June 2020	Team Leader - Sustainability and Environment
8. Participate in and celebrate NAIDOC Week	a) Promote NAIDOC Week activities to staff through internal Council website, internal newsletters, and email banners	July 2019	Reconciliation Plan Working Group Chair
	b) Raise awareness and share information amongst our staff of the meaning of NAIDOC Week which includes information about local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples and communities	July 2019	Reconciliation Plan Working Group Chair
	c) Promote external NAIDOC Week activities on external Council website	July 2019	Manager - Marketing and Communications
	d) Ensure our Reconciliation Action Plan Working Group participates in an external NAIDOC Week event.	July 2019	Reconciliation Plan Working Group Chair
	e) Reconciliation Action Plan Working Group to plan two staff/internal events for NAIDOC Week	July 2019	Reconciliation Plan Working Group Chair
	f) Promote NAIDOC Week through City of Greater Shepparton entrance flags	July 2019	Team Leader – Business and Industry Development



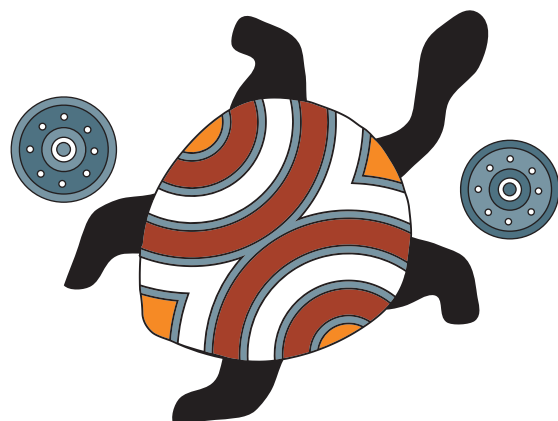
ACTION	DELIVERABLE	TIMELINE	RESPONSIBILITY
9. Raise internal understanding of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples' cultural protocols	a) Develop and implement a plan to raise awareness and understanding of the meaning and significance behind Acknowledgement of Country and Welcome to Country protocols (including any local cultural protocols)	March 2020	Team Leader - Community Strengthening
	b) Explore who the Traditional Owners are of the lands and waters in our local area	March 2020	Team Leader - Community Strengthening
	c) Scope and develop a list of local Traditional Owners of the lands and waters within our organisations sphere of influence	March 2020	Team Leader - Community Strengthening
	d) Continue to adhere to Council's flag protocols	Ongoing To be tracked in July 2019 October 2019 February 2020 May 2020	Manager Corporate Governance
	e) Display Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander flags at the three Council flag stations and the Council Boardroom	Ongoing To be tracked in July 2019 October 2019 February 2020 May 2020	Manager Corporate Governance
	f) Continue to acknowledge Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples at the start of official meetings	Ongoing To be tracked in July 2019 October 2019 February 2020 May 2020	Whole of Staff, led by Chief Executive Officer
	g) Revise Council's official Acknowledgement to Traditional Owners to specifically acknowledge the Registered Aboriginal Party and the 8 Clans	June 2020	Team Leader – Business and Industry Development Team Leader - Community Strengthening
	h) Facilitate the provision of a Welcome to Country at significant Council run public events	Ongoing To be tracked in July 2019 October 2019 February 2020 May 2020	Chief Executive Officer
	i) Have an Acknowledgement of Country on Council's external webpage	December 2019	Reconciliation Plan Working Group Chair



ACTION	DELIVERABLE	TIMELINE	RESPONSIBILITY
10. Encourage appropriate Acknowledgement of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures	a) Celebrate/recognise Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples' dates of significance by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Supporting the delivery of the Sorry Day event Supporting the delivery of the Apology Breakfast 	Annually May 2020 February 2020	Whole of staff, led by Chief Executive Officer
	b) Include significant dates on internal and external websites	Ongoing To be tracked in July 2019 October 2019 February 2020 May 2020	Manager Marketing and Communications
	c) Have all Council managed Children's Services display Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander flags	March 2020	Team Leader - Children's Services
	d) Include significant dates on the annual Calendar of Culturally Significant Dates	Annually November 2019	Team Leader - Community Strengthening
	e) Acknowledge the local female Victorian Aboriginal Honour Roll inductees at Council's annual International Women's Day event	March 2020	Team Leader - Community Strengthening
	f) Have information regarding local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples' cultures and histories on Council's external webpage	December 2019	Reconciliation Plan Working Group Chair
	g) Investigate and plan to install a plaque at the Council's Welsford Street Office entrance to indicate the building is on a culturally significant site	Ongoing To be tracked in July 2019 October 2019 February 2020 May 2020	Reconciliation Plan Working Group Chair
	h) Investigate celebration days to ensure they are culturally appropriate	December 2019	Reconciliation Plan Working Group Chair



ACTION	DELIVERABLE	TIMELINE	RESPONSIBILITY
11. Respect places of heritage significance	a) Continue to investigate places of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples' cultural heritage significance and ensure that appropriate planning controls are put in place to ensure that these places are appropriately conserved for future generations	Ongoing To be tracked in July 2019 October 2019 February 2020 May 2020	Team Leader - Strategic Planning
	b) Ensure relevant development proposals respect the significance of culturally significant places and ensure that they are respected and not detrimentally impacted upon, through the application of the <i>Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006</i> (the Act), <i>Aboriginal Heritage Regulations 2018</i> , Victorian Heritage Register, and the Heritage Overlay which forms part of the Greater Shepparton Planning Scheme	Ongoing To be tracked in July 2019 October 2019 February 2020 May 2020	Team Leader - Strategic Planning

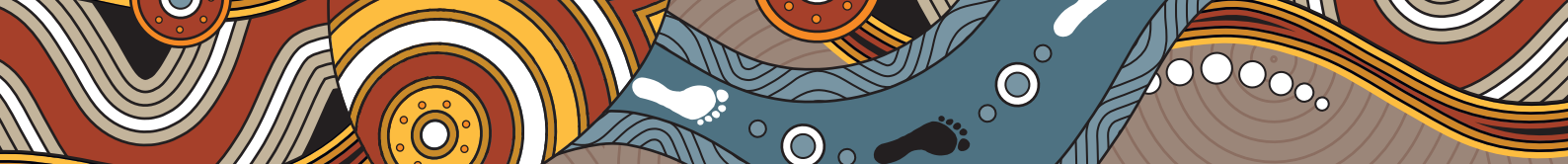






OPPORTUNITIES

ACTION	DELIVERABLE	TIMELINE	RESPONSIBILITY
12. Increase Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples employment opportunities within Council	a) Continue implementation of the Algabonyah Agreement for Council to have 2% of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples employment by 2020	Ongoing To be tracked and reported on in July 2019 October 2019 February 2020 May 2020	Manager - People and Development
	b) Develop a business case for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment within our organisation	July 2019	Manager – People and Development
	c) Identify current Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff to inform future employment and development opportunities	April 2020	Manager – People and Development
	d) Continue the employment of Aboriginal Employment Officer	Ongoing To be tracked in July 2019 October 2019 February 2020 May 2020	Manager - People and Development
	e) Identify barriers within the current recruitment and selection process that prevent members of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples' communities applying for roles with Council	Ongoing To be tracked in July 2019 October 2019 February 2020 May 2020	Manager - People and Development
	f) Identify and address perceived barriers for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples obtaining employment at Council. EG: Webpage	Ongoing To be tracked in July 2019 October 2019 February 2020 May 2020	Manager - People and Development
	g) Continue to investigate Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples' employment pathways (e.g. traineeships or apprenticeships)	Ongoing To be tracked in July 2019 October 2019 February 2020 May 2020	Manager - People and Development



ACTION	DELIVERABLE	TIMELINE	RESPONSIBILITY
13. Encourage Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples participation in volunteering	a) Aim to increase Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples participation in volunteering opportunities provided by Council through the implementation of Council's Volunteer Strategy	May 2020	Manager - People and Development Team Leader - Community Strengthening
	b) Promote and support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples' community volunteering through utilising culturally appropriate methods of communications and existing networks	May 2020	Team Leader - Community Strengthening
14. Investigate Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples supplier diversity	a) Identify local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples' suppliers	February 2020	Team Leader – Contracts and Procurement
	b) Develop an understanding of the mutual benefits of procurement from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander owned businesses	February 2020	Team Leader – Contracts and Procurement
	c) Develop a business case for criteria in procurement scoring that considers Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples' owned organisations and employers	June 2020	Team Leader – Contracts and Procurement
15. Explore Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples' tourism promotion opportunities	a) Screen an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples video welcome at the Visitor Information Centre – in Yorta Yorta language and English	May 2020	Manager Economic Development
	b) Increase cultural interpretive signage on shared paths and The Flats Walk in conjunction with Yorta Yorta Nation Aboriginal Corporation to better inform both self and guided tours.	June 2020 To be tracked in July 2019 October 2019 February 2020 May 2020	Team Leader - Sustainability and Environment
	c) Promote local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples' cultures and heritage as a primary strength of Greater Shepparton	May 2020	Manager Economic Development
	d) Increase the presence of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples' cultures and art in Greater Shepparton	Ongoing To be tracked in July 2019 October 2019 February 2020 May 2020	Director - SAM



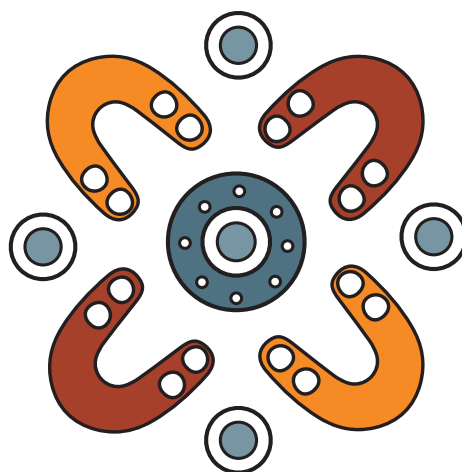
ACTION	DELIVERABLE	TIMELINE	RESPONSIBILITY
16. Increase educational opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students	a) Implement the Closing the Gap project to raise participation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in Maternal and Child Health and Kindergarten	Ongoing To be tracked in July 2019 October 2019 February 2020 May 2020	Team Leader - Children's Services Team Leader – Maternal and Child Health
	b) Work in partnership to support and progress the Munarra Centre for Regional Excellence project	Ongoing To be tracked in July 2019 October 2019 February 2020 May 2020	Manager - Active Living Executive Leadership Team
	c) Have all Council managed Children's Services develop a service based Reconciliation Action Plan that is linked to the Council RAP and the Narragunnawali platform	June 2020	Team Leader – Children's Services
17. Showcase Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander art and performing arts	a) Ensure arts programming reflects Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples' cultures through curatorial work, community liaison and engagement with local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities	Ongoing To be tracked in July 2019 October 2019 February 2020 May 2020	Director - SAM
	b) Shepparton Art Museum (SAM) to continue to deliver the Indigenous Ceramic Art Award, and other relevant exhibitions, programs and events	Ongoing To be tracked in July 2019 October 2019 February 2020 May 2020	Director - SAM
	c) Feature local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples' art on Council computers as a screensaver	February 2020	Director – SAM Manager Marketing and Communications
	d) Riverlinks Venues - Eastbank and WestSide. Continue to present Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples' performing arts companies as a regular component of programming	Ongoing To be tracked in July 2019 October 2019 February 2020 May 2020	Manager Riverlinks





GOVERNANCE AND TRACKING PROGRESS

ACTION	DELIVERABLE	TIMELINE	RESPONSIBILITY
18. Build support for the RAP	a) Consult with key Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders regarding Council's RAP	July 2019	Reconciliation Plan Working Group Chair
	b) Define resource needs for RAP development and implementation	July 2019	Executive Leadership Team and Senior Leadership Group led by the Chief Executive Officer
	c) Define systems and capability needs to track, measure and report on RAP activities	July 2019	Reconciliation Plan Working Group Chair
	d) Complete the annual RAP Impact Measurement Questionnaire and submit to Reconciliation Australia	Annually September 2020	Reconciliation Plan Working Group Chair
19. Review and Refresh RAP	a) Liaise with Reconciliation Australia to develop a new RAP based on learnings, challenges and achievements	March 2020	Reconciliation Plan Working Group Chair
	b) Submit draft RAP to Reconciliation Australia for review	March 2020	Reconciliation Plan Working Group Chair
	c) Submit draft RAP to Reconciliation Australia for formal endorsement	June 2020	Reconciliation Plan Working Group Chair









Appendix one – The Uluru Statement from the Heart

“ULURU STATEMENT FROM THE HEART

We, gathered at the 2017 National Constitutional Convention, coming from all points of the southern sky, make this statement from the heart:

Our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander tribes were the first sovereign Nations of the Australian continent and its adjacent islands, and possessed it under our own laws and customs. This our ancestors did, according to the reckoning of our culture, from the Creation, according to the common law from ‘time immemorial’, and according to science more than 60,000 years ago.

This sovereignty is a spiritual notion: the ancestral tie between the land, or ‘mother nature’, and the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples who were born therefrom, remain attached thereto, and must one day return thither to be united with our ancestors. This link is the basis of the ownership of the soil, or better, of sovereignty. It has never been ceded or extinguished, and co-exists with the sovereignty of the Crown.

How could it be otherwise? That peoples possessed a land for sixty millennia and this sacred link disappears from world history in merely the last two hundred years?

With substantive constitutional change and structural reform, we believe this ancient sovereignty can shine through as a fuller expression of Australia’s nationhood.

Proportionally, we are the most incarcerated people on the planet. We are not an innately criminal people. Our children are alienated from their families at unprecedented rates. This cannot be because we have no love for them. And our youth languish in detention in obscene numbers. They should be our hope for the future.

These dimensions of our crisis tell plainly the structural nature of our problem. This is the torment of our powerlessness.

We seek constitutional reforms to empower our people and take a rightful place in our own country. When we have power over our destiny our children will flourish. They will walk in two worlds and their culture will be a gift to their country.

We call for the establishment of a First Nations Voice enshrined in the Constitution.

Makarrata is the culmination of our agenda: the coming together after a struggle. It captures our aspirations for a fair and truthful relationship with the people of Australia and a better future for our children based on justice and self-determination.

We seek a Makarrata Commission to supervise a process of agreement-making between governments and First Nations and truth-telling about our history.

In 1967 we were counted, in 2017 we seek to be heard. We leave base camp and start our trek across this vast country. We invite you to walk with us in a movement of the Australian people for a better future.”^{ixii}



Appendix two – Recommendations from the Final Report of the Referendum Council 30 June 2017

“The Council recommends:

- **That a referendum be held to provide in the Australian Constitution for a representative body that gives Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander First Nations a Voice to the Commonwealth Parliament. One of the specific functions of such a body, to be set out in legislation outside the Constitution, should include the function of monitoring the use of the heads of power in section 51 (xxvi) and section 122. The body will recognise the status of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as the first peoples of Australia.**

It will be for the Parliament to consider what further definition is required before the proposal is in a form appropriate to be put to a referendum. In that respect, the Council draws attention to the Guiding Principles that emerged from the National Constitutional Convention at Uluru on 23–26 May 2017 and advises that the support of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, in terms of both process and outcome, will be necessary for the success of a referendum.

In consequence of the First Nations Regional Dialogues, the Council is of the view that the only option for a referendum proposal that accords with the wishes of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples is that which has been described as providing, in the Constitution, for a Voice to Parliament.

In principle, the establishment by the Constitution of a body to be a Voice for First Peoples, with the structure and functions of the body to be defined by Parliament, may be seen as an appropriate form of recognition, of both substantive and symbolic value, of the unique place of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in Australian history and in contemporary Australian society.

The Council recommends this option, understanding that finalizing a proposal will involve further consultation, including steps of the kind envisaged in the Guiding Principles adopted at the Uluru Convention.

The Council further recommends:

1. **That an extra-constitutional Declaration of Recognition be enacted by legislation passed by all Australian Parliaments, ideally on the same day, to articulate a symbolic statement of recognition to unify Australians.**

A Declaration of Recognition should be developed, containing inspiring and unifying words articulating Australia’s shared history, heritage and aspirations. The Declaration should bring together the three parts of our Australian story: our ancient First Peoples’ heritage and culture, our British institutions, and our multicultural unity. It should be legislated by all Australian Parliaments, on the same day, either in the lead up to or on the same day as the referendum establishing the First Peoples’ Voice to Parliament, as an expression of national unity and reconciliation.

In addition, the Council reports that there are two matters of great importance to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, as articulated in the Uluru Statement from the Heart, that can be addressed outside the Constitution. The Uluru Statement called for the establishment of a Makarrata Commission with the function of supervising agreement-making and facilitating a process of local and regional truth telling. The Council recognises that this is a legislative initiative for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to pursue with government. The Council is not in a position to make a specific recommendation on this because it does not fall within our terms of reference. However, we draw attention to this proposal and note that various state governments are engaged in agreement-making.”^{lxiii}



Appendix three – Australian Government’s response to Referendum Council’s report on Constitutional Recognition

Response to Referendum Council’s report on Constitutional Recognition^{lxiv}

26 October 2017

Joint media release

Prime Minister

The Hon. Malcom Turnbull

Attorney-General

Leader of the Government in the Senate

Senator The Hon. George Brandis QC

Minister for Indigenous affairs

Senator The Hon. Nigel Scullion

The Turnbull Government has carefully considered the Referendum Council’s call to amend the Constitution to provide for a national Indigenous representative assembly to constitute a “Voice to Parliament”.

The Government does not believe such an addition to our national representative institutions is either desirable or capable of winning acceptance in a referendum.

Our democracy is built on the foundation of all Australian citizens having equal civic rights - all being able to vote for, stand for and serve in either of the two chambers of our national Parliament - the House of Representatives and the Senate.

A constitutionally enshrined additional representative assembly for which only Indigenous Australians could vote for or serve in is inconsistent with this fundamental principle.

It would inevitably become seen as a third chamber of Parliament. The Referendum Council noted the concerns that the proposed body would have insufficient power if its constitutional function was advisory only.

The Referendum Council provided no guidance as to how this new representative assembly would be elected or how the diversity of Indigenous circumstance and experience could be fairly or democratically represented.

Moreover, the Government does not believe such a radical change to our constitution’s representative institutions has any realistic prospect of being supported by a majority of Australians in a majority of States.

The Government believes that any proposal for constitutional change should conform to the principles laid down by the 2012 Expert Panel, namely that any proposal should “be capable of being supported by an overwhelming majority of Australians from across the political and social spectrums”.

The Referendum Council said the Voice to Parliament was a “take it or leave it” proposal for the Parliament and the Australian people. We do not agree.



The Council's proposal for an Indigenous representative assembly, or Voice, is new to the discussion about Constitutional change, and dismissed the extensive and valuable work done over the past decade - largely with bipartisan support.

We are confident that we can build on that work and develop Constitutional amendments that will unite our nation rather than establish a new national representative assembly open to some Australians only.

The challenge remains to find a Constitutional amendment that will succeed, and which does not undermine the universal principles of unity, equality and "one person one vote".

We have listened to the arguments put forward by proponents of the Voice, and both understand and recognise the desire for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians to have a greater say in their own affairs.

We acknowledge the values and the aspirations which lie at the heart of the Uluru Statement. People who ask for a voice feel voiceless or feel like they're not being heard. We remain committed to finding effective ways to develop stronger local voices and empowerment of local people.

Our goal should be to see more Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians serving in the House and the Senate - members of a Parliament which is elected by all Australians.

The Government has written in response to Mr Shorten's call for a Joint Select Committee, and have asked that the committee considers the recommendations of the existing bodies of work developed by the Expert Panel (2012), the Joint Select Committee on Recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples (2015) and the Referendum Council report (2017).

The Coalition continues to aim to work in a bipartisan way to support Constitutional recognition.



Appendix four – The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples

“Article 18

Indigenous peoples have the right to participate in decision-making in matters which would affect their rights, through representatives chosen by themselves in accordance with their own procedures, as well as to maintain and develop their own indigenous decision making institutions.

Article 19

States shall consult and cooperate in good faith with the indigenous peoples concerned through their own representative institutions in order to obtain their free, prior and informed consent before adopting and implementing legislative or administrative measures that may affect them.”

Appendix five - Section 19 of the Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006

“Cultural rights

- (1) All persons with a particular cultural, religious, racial or linguistic background must not be denied the right, in community with other persons of that background, to enjoy his or her culture, to declare and practise his or her religion and to use his or her language.
- (2) Aboriginal persons hold distinct cultural rights and must not be denied the right, with other members of their community—
 - (a) to enjoy their identity and culture; and
 - (b) to maintain and use their language; and
 - (c) to maintain their kinship ties; and
 - (d) to maintain their distinctive spiritual, material and economic relationship with the land and waters and other resources with which they have a connection under traditional laws and customs.”



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