

Cardinia Shire Council

Innovate Reconciliation Action Plan

March 2026 – February 2028



Image credits

Page 3	NAIDOC week staff cultural awareness session – Gunuwarra Art & Education, Cardinia Civic Centre 2024
Page 4 -5	Welcome to Country Bunurong Land Council Reconciliation Week event, Cardinia Civic Centre 2024
Page 11	Djarlo Dance Group – Reconciliation Week event, Cardinia Cultural Centre 2025
Page 12	Bergun Trail signage and artwork, Bergun Trail 2024
Page 13	Djarlo Dance Group – Reconciliation Week event, Cardinia Cultural Centre 2025
Page 14	Josh Muir “Forever I Live” exhibition, Cardinia Cultural Centre 2025
Page 15	Djirri Djirri Wurundjeri women’s dance group – Reconciliation Week event. Hills Hub, Emerald 2025
Page 18	Welcome to Country – Bunurong Land Council – Aboriginal meeting place and bush school, Koo Wee Rup 2025
Page 19	Welcome to Country – Bunurong Land Council – Reconciliation Week event, Cardinia Civic Centre 2023
Page 25	Marra Marra Our Counties Song exhibition, Cardinia Cultural Centre 2025
Page 31	Robert Michael Young – Coloured in Country installation, Cardinia Cultural Centre 2025-2026
Page 35	Welcome to Country – Bunurong Land Council – Aboriginal meeting place and bush school, Koo Wee Rup 2025
Page 39	Cardinia Civic Centre – Reconciliation Week event, Cardinia Civic Centre 2025

Acknowledgements

Cardinia Shire Council respectfully acknowledges Bunurong and Wurundjeri People of the Kulin Nation and pay our respects to their Elders past and present.

We acknowledge the contributions of all who supported the development of our third Reconciliation Action Plan.

We extend our deep gratitude to the Traditional Custodians of the lands across our municipality, the Bunurong Land Council Aboriginal Corporation and the Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation, for their continued partnership throughout the development of this Plan. We especially acknowledge Jillian West and Alexandra Prouse from Nomuckerlener First Nations Training, Consulting and Mentoring for their wisdom and support.

We thank the many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community members, including Koorie students and school leaders, whose voices have shaped this plan.

We also thank the Department of Education and Peter Dye, Koorie Engagement Support Officer, for their strong advocacy and coordination in supporting youth participation and leadership.

Our appreciation extends to the Aboriginal gathering places, Kooweerup Regional Health Service, and the many community members, partners, and stakeholders who shared their stories, perspectives, and aspirations for reconciliation in Cardinia Shire.

We also recognise the dedication and commitment of our Reconciliation Action Plan Working Group, including Councillors, Council officers, and senior leaders, whose leadership and collaboration have been vital in shaping a meaningful and actionable plan.

Your contributions are deeply valued and have helped ensure this plan reflects the voices of community and works towards strengthening reconciliation in Cardinia Shire.





Contents

Page 6-5	Shared Country, Shared Responsibility - Art Narrative
Page 8	Artist Profile
Page 9	Mayor's message
Page 10	Statement from CEO of Reconciliation Australia
Page 11	Our vision for reconciliation
Page 12	Our business
Page 16	Our Reconciliation Action Plan
Page 18	Developing our Reconciliation Action Plan
Page 20	Relationships
Page 26	Respect
Page 32	Opportunities
Page 36	Governance



Shared Country, Shared Responsibility - Art Narrative

This artwork represents the living landscape of Cardinia Shire — a place where waterways, coastlines, bushland and mountain ranges are deeply interconnected. Stretching from the ocean's edge to the Dandenong Ranges, the scene reflects not only geographical diversity but also the enduring cultural presence of Aboriginal peoples whose knowledge, stories and stewardship have shaped this Country for tens of thousands of years.

At the heart of the artwork is the concept of Caring for Country — a cultural responsibility held by Aboriginal communities that recognises land, water, sky, plants, animals and people as inseparable. Country is not simply a place; it is identity, memory, law, spirituality and belonging. Through this lens, the landscape is alive, and the wellbeing of people is directly linked to the wellbeing of the environment. The artwork invites viewers to understand that Caring for Country is both an ancient practice and a shared modern responsibility.

Gum leaves weave throughout the composition, symbolising resilience, healing and continuity.

Eucalyptus trees are vital to Australian ecosystems and hold deep cultural value in Aboriginal knowledge systems, providing medicine, shelter, tools and spiritual meaning. Their presence represents strength and the ongoing renewal of life.



Scar trees are depicted as powerful reminders of living cultural heritage. These trees bear the marks of bark removal by Aboriginal peoples who respectfully used natural resources to create canoes, shields and containers. Scar trees are not relics of the past; they are evidence of sustainable practices and ongoing cultural connection to land. They speak to a history of innovation, adaptation and respect for natural systems.

Shell middens appear along the coastal and riverine areas of the artwork. These layered shell deposits are archaeological and cultural sites that reveal thousands of years of gathering, sharing and community life. Middens are records of seasonal knowledge, food practices and social connection, reminding viewers that Aboriginal history is embedded in the landscape itself.



The inclusion of rare and significant native species highlights the delicate balance of biodiversity and the importance of environmental guardianship:

Southern Brown Bandicoot

– a small, nocturnal marsupial known for its shy nature and vital role in soil health. By digging for food, it naturally aerates the ground and disperses seeds, contributing to ecosystem regeneration. Its presence symbolises quiet but essential contributions to environmental wellbeing.



Helmeted Honeyeater – Victoria’s bird emblem and one of Australia’s rarest birds. Recognisable by its bright yellow plumage and distinctive “helmet,” it represents hope, resilience and the success that can come from dedicated conservation efforts. Its survival depends on healthy wetland habitats, underscoring the importance of habitat protection.



Ant-blue Butterfly– delicate yet significant, this butterfly relies on specific native plant species to survive. It symbolises interdependence within nature, reminding us that even the smallest species play crucial roles in maintaining ecological balance.



Together, these animals illustrate the richness of Country and the responsibility to protect it. Their vulnerability also reflects the broader impacts of environmental change and the need for collective stewardship.

This artwork ultimately expresses that Caring for Country is everyone’s responsibility. While Aboriginal communities have upheld these practices for millennia, reconciliation calls for shared understanding and action. Respecting cultural knowledge, protecting biodiversity, and nurturing sustainable relationships with land and water are not only environmental responsibilities — they are pathways to stronger communities, deeper respect and a more inclusive future.

Through colour, symbolism and story, the piece honours the past, acknowledges the present, and looks toward a future where cultural recognition and environmental care walk hand in hand. It stands as a visual commitment to learning from Aboriginal wisdom and working together to ensure that Country continues to thrive for generations to come.



Artist profile

Bitja (Dixon Patten) is a proud Gunnai, Gunditjmara, Dhudhuroa and Yorta Yorta man with blood connection to Wiradjuri, Yuin, Wemba Wemba, Gweagal, Wadi Wadi, Monaro and Djab Wurrung.

He is an artist, designer, mentor, influencer and a strong community advocate.

Bitja's artistic practice is informed through a strong cultural value that his family and community have imprinted into his mind, heart, and spirit and the narratives often delve deep into familial history, often in celebration but also in search of healing.

Bitja's exploration of culture and connection and his willingness to share and learn are informed by the art of Deep Listening, or in his native Yorta Yorta language 'Gulpa Ngawul'.

This practice has guided many of Dixon's expressions by uncovering the layers, exploring trauma, exploring grief, reclaiming culture, bridging gaps, being accountable, learning to understand and also challenge systems, influencing spaces and learning to celebrate self.

He takes his role as a storyteller seriously and feels humbled to continue this strong aspect of Aboriginal culture.

Mayor's message

On behalf of Cardinia Shire Council, we are proud to present our third Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) 2026 - 28. This plan will outline how we will contribute to reconciliation, strengthen relationships, demonstrate respect, and provide opportunities for collaboration with our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities in Cardinia Shire.

Reconciliation is not a one-time event, it is an ongoing journey that requires humility, transparency, and partnership with community. Throughout the development of our RAP, we have received input from Traditional Owners, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community members and our wider community. We have developed a well-rounded plan that outlines tangible actions and initiatives to help us build on reconciliation across the Shire.

Cardinia Shire Council is committed to creating a community where Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures are visible and celebrated. Our RAP aligns closely with our Council Plan 2025–29 and reflects our shared responsibility to embed Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural values across all areas of Council, from service delivery and infrastructure to planning and community partnerships.

Our RAP recognises our ongoing commitment towards creating opportunities for learning and growth for our next generation enabling young people to develop a broader cultural understanding and connection to place within our Shire.

On behalf of Cardinia Shire Council, I extend gratitude to the Traditional Owner groups, community members, and Council staff who have contributed to the development of our third Reconciliation Action Plan. Your insights and leadership continue to guide our path forward.

Together, let us continue this journey of reconciliation, one grounded in respect, strengthened by relationships, and focused on a future where all people feel seen, heard, and valued.

Cr Brett Owen
Mayor 2025-26
Cardinia Shire Council



Statement from CEO of Reconciliation Australia

Reconciliation Australia commends Cardinia Shire Council on the formal endorsement of its Innovate Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP).

Commencing an Innovate RAP is a crucial and rewarding period in an organisation's reconciliation journey. It is a time to build strong foundations and relationships, ensuring sustainable, thoughtful, and impactful RAP outcomes into the future.

Since 2006, RAPs have provided a framework for organisations to leverage their structures and diverse spheres of influence to support the national reconciliation movement.

This Innovate RAP is both an opportunity and an invitation for Cardinia Shire Council to expand its understanding of its core strengths and deepen its relationship with its community, staff, and stakeholders.

By investigating and understanding the integral role it plays across its sphere of influence, Cardinia Shire Council will create dynamic reconciliation outcomes, supported by and aligned with its business objectives.

An Innovate RAP is the time to strengthen and develop the connections that form the lifeblood of all RAP commitments. The RAP program's framework of relationships, respect, and opportunities emphasises not only the importance of fostering consultation and collaboration with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and communities, but also empowering and enabling staff to contribute to this process, as well.

With over 5.5 million people now either working or studying in an organisation with a RAP, the program's potential for impact is greater than ever. Cardinia Shire Council is part of a strong network of more than 3,000 corporate, government, and not-for-profit organisations that have taken goodwill and intention, and transformed it into action.

Implementing an Innovate RAP signals Council's readiness to develop and strengthen relationships, engage staff and stakeholders in reconciliation, and pilot innovative strategies to ensure effective outcomes.

Getting these steps right will ensure the sustainability of future RAPs and reconciliation initiatives, and provide meaningful impact toward Australia's reconciliation journey.

Congratulations Cardinia Shire Council on your Innovate RAP and I look forward to following your ongoing reconciliation journey.

Karen Mundine
Chief Executive Officer
Reconciliation Australia



Our vision for reconciliation

Our vision for reconciliation is a community that is welcoming, inclusive and respectful where Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander voices are heard, valued, and reflected in decision-making across all levels of Council.

We acknowledge the deep and unbroken connection of the Bunurong and Wurundjeri peoples to the lands and waterways across Cardinia Shire and commit to walking alongside Traditional Custodians to embed cultural values into our policies, services, infrastructure, and workplace.

We acknowledge the painful legacy of colonisation. We recognise that reconciliation requires confronting our shared histories with honesty and humility and working to achieve healing and justice with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

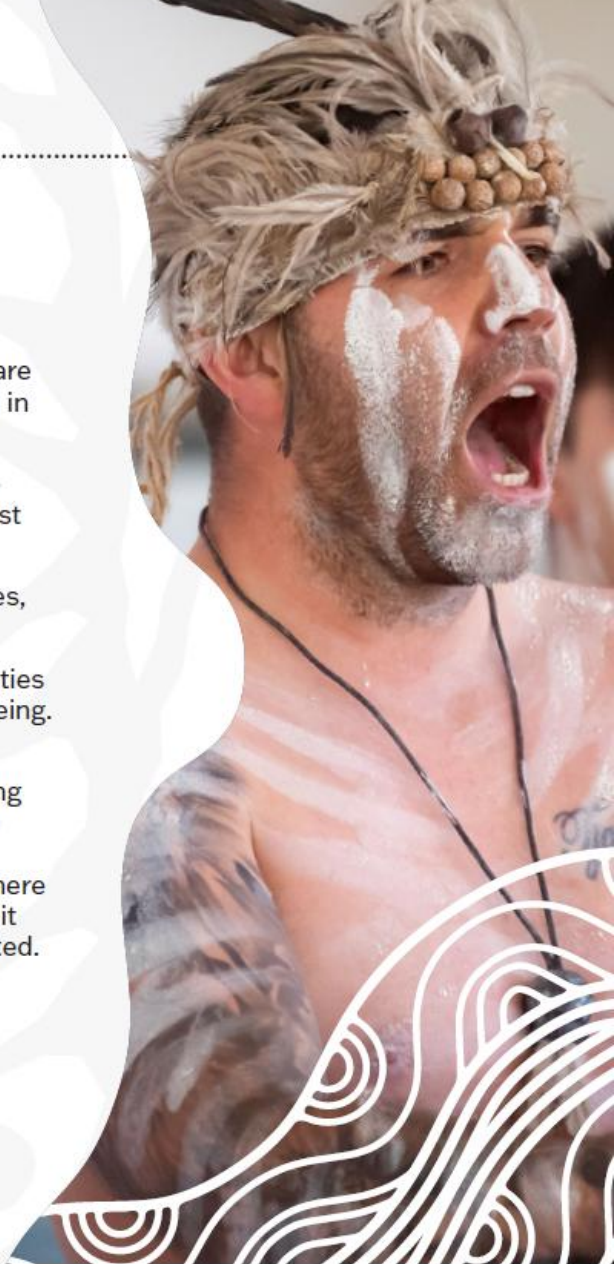
We are committed to working collaboratively to foster understanding of First Nations histories and vibrant culture. Our goal is to enhance equity, connection to culture and Country, positive health outcomes, leadership opportunities, and self-determination for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community members.

Statement of Reconciliation

Through our Reconciliation Action Plan, we are building a future where:

- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples are empowered, celebrated, and actively involved in shaping the future of Cardinia Shire.
- Relationships between First Nations and non-Indigenous peoples are grounded in truth, trust and mutual respect.
- Cultural safety is upheld across our workplaces, community services, and public spaces.
- All people have equitable access to opportunities to support positive physical and mental wellbeing.

We are committed to learning from the past, acting with integrity in the present, and shaping a future where reconciliation is a shared journey. We are proud to play our part in creating a community where everyone belongs, and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people feel safe, respected, and connected.



Our business

Cardinia Shire Council is a local government authority (LGA) located approximately 55 kilometres south-east of Melbourne's central business district. Covering an area of 1,280 square kilometres, the Shire includes urban growth areas, rural townships, foothill villages and rich agricultural landscapes. Cardinia Shire is one of Victoria's fastest-growing municipalities, with an estimated population of 132,289 in 2025, projected to exceed 167,000 by 2046.

As of the 2021 Census, 1,145 residents identified as an Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander person, making up 1% of the total population, double the proportion recorded in 2011. This is higher in Cardinia Shire than the average across interface councils and Greater Melbourne.

Cardinia Shire is home to people from more than 117 cultural backgrounds, with 18% of residents speaking a language other than English at home. The Shire includes three key regions: our growing urban corridor (Beaconsfield, Pakenham and Officer), scenic hills villages (Emerald, Cockatoo, Gembrook), and productive southern rural areas (Lang Lang, Koo Wee Rup). Council provides a broad range of essential community services, infrastructure projects, programs, and activities to promote the wellbeing, sustainability, and prosperity of our diverse and expanding population. These services support residents across all life stages, from newborns to seniors, and extend to businesses, industries, and community organisations.

Council Mission 2025–29

We partner with our community to build a better Cardinia – where diversity and culture thrives, productive land and natural environments are protected, we look after today, and we plan for the future.

Wominjeka

'Welcome'

"All of our Country is highly significant, every square inch, every rock, every leaf, every dune and every artefact. If you lose enough of something, what little you have left becomes so much more important."

—Bunurong Land Council Aboriginal Corporation



Community Vision 2040

“We acknowledge that we are on the traditional land of the Bunurong and Wurundjeri people.

We understand, value and incorporate these contributions, past and present. We empower everyone to have a voice. We speak with the optimism and insight of our people, the energy of our community members and the wisdom of all those that came before us.

We support all people of Cardinia so that they are strong, resilient, safe, socially connected and physically and mentally well. We do this by strengthening community cohesion through engagement and advocacy.

We care for our country. We take preventative and mitigative actions on climate change in our community, environment, and the planet in everything we do.

We are sustainable in the way we live, we work close to home, we grow food, and we make valuable contributions to the nation. We protect our community, farms, industries, landscapes and biodiversity to ensure they are resilient.

We provide fit for purpose infrastructure and services that cater for the growth of the community. Growth will be managed prudently and sustainably so that it enables our progress towards community priorities.

Through advocacy and community engagement, the infrastructure, local community and healthcare services are in place to meet our needs.”





Legislative and strategic alignment

Cardinia Shire Council is committed to upholding the rights and dignity of all people, including First Nations communities, through its responsibilities under Australian and Victorian law. These laws reflect Australia's commitment to international human rights and anti-discrimination principles, and guide councils to create inclusive, respectful and equitable environments.

Key legislation such as the Local Government Act 2020 and Gender Equality Act 2020 requires council to ensure that services, spaces and decisions are fair and accessible to everyone. Council must also take action to prevent family violence, promote inclusion for people with disability, and consider the impacts of climate change.

By aligning with these laws, Cardinia Shire Council strengthens its role as a partner in reconciliation, ensuring that its programs, services and policies support equity, cultural safety, and meaningful participation for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

This Reconciliation Action Plan aligns with the Council Plan 2025–29, particularly the strategic objective of Thriving Communities. While it supports all five strategic objectives—Thriving Communities, Vibrant Places, Adaptive Environments, Prosperous Economies, and Responsible Leaders—it is recognised as a key initiative under Thriving Communities. Through this RAP, Council is strengthening relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, enhancing cultural visibility, and improving access to culturally appropriate services. These efforts directly contribute to community identity, wellbeing, liveability, and inclusive service delivery — embedding reconciliation as a core part of how we serve our diverse and growing municipality.

Our workplace

Cardinia Shire employs 627 people through full-time, part-time, and contracted roles.

Council acknowledges the importance of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment and is committed to building a culturally safe and inclusive workplace. Cultural identification is not currently captured during the recruitment process; however, Council is working towards reviewing and improving its internal processes to ensure that data collection reflects intersectionality in a culturally safe, respectful, and meaningful way. This will help better understand and support the diverse experiences and identities within our workforce and strengthen our commitment to equity and inclusion.

Council's sphere of influence extends across internal staff, councillors, local community members, Traditional Owner groups, schools, local service providers, industry partners, and regional and state government. As we grow, we remain focused on balancing environmental conservation, infrastructure development, and community wellbeing, while embedding reconciliation and cultural values into the heart of our organisation.



Our Reconciliation Action Plan

Cardinia Shire Council is proud to present our third Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP), which reflects our ongoing commitment to reconciliation, respect, equity, and building meaningful relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as outlined in our Mission and Vision. This RAP has been developed through deep listening and extensive community engagement, ensuring that the voices of First Nations community members, Traditional Owners, and stakeholders have guided our priorities and actions. It builds on the strong foundations of our previous RAPs and reflects the insights, achievements, and challenges we've encountered along the way.

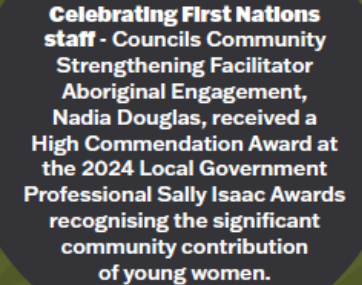
Since 2015 Cardinia Shire Council has made significant progress in embedding reconciliation. We have strengthened partnerships with Traditional Owner groups through formal Memoranda of Understanding, supported youth leadership, improved access to culturally safe services, and created new employment and professional development pathways for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff.

In the development of Council's third Reconciliation Plan we recognise reconciliation requires ongoing collaboration, adequate resourcing, and alignment with Council's broader strategic priorities. These lessons have informed the development of this RAP, ensuring that actions are realistic, measurable, and embedded within existing workplans across Council.


Our successes:



Reconciliation Week - Cardinia Shire Council proudly hosts a Reconciliation Flag Raising Event on Bunurong Country and community event on Wurundjeri Country, as part of our ongoing commitment to our Reconciliation Action Plan and First Nations communities.





Celebrating First Nations staff - Council's Community Strengthening Facilitator Aboriginal Engagement, Nadia Douglas, received a High Commendation Award at the 2024 Local Government Professional Sally Isaac Awards recognising the significant community contribution of young women.





Engaging through cultural awareness training - Councillors and Managers completed cultural training with Nomucklerener First Nations Training. Staff were also invited to NAIDOC Cultural Awareness sessions with Gunuwarra and supported in creating personal Acknowledgements of Country with guidance from the Aboriginal Engagement Facilitator.







Deadly Day with Cardinia Marrung School Network - We are proud to support the delivery of the Koorie Kids Deadly Day, Koori Student Leadership Day and School Community of Practice through the local Cardinia Marrung School Network. In 2024 the Marrung Network won the Outstanding Koorie Education Award through Victorian Department of Education excellence awards.



Use of Indigenous Language - In consultation with our Place Names Advisory Committee, Bunurong Land Council Aboriginal Corporation and community feedback Council continues to identify opportunities to use Indigenous language when considering naming of local roads, features and localities. Boollam Boollam Child and Family Centre was named in 2024 and is the fourth Child and Family Centre to be named using Indigenous language.




Arts and cultural events - Our Arts and Creative Industries team has delivered a range of First Nations arts and cultural programs including the Walking Through a Songline Exhibition, Kutcha Edwards performance, Dancing Between the Echoes exhibition by local First Nations artist Emmy Webbers and Connecting to Country by Alex Kerr.



Bergun wayfinding trail Aboriginal Storytelling signage - Council has worked in partnership with the Bunurong Land Council, Little Rocket and artists Auntie Heather Kennedy and Mark Brown to create 12 Indigenous storytelling signs and an Indigenous sculpture that celebrate and tell the stories and of the Bunurong people of the Kulin Nation.



Council Identifies Reconciliation Action Plan as a key deliverable in the Council Plan 2025-29 - Council's dedication to Reconciliation is further solidified through inclusion of the Reconciliation Action Plan as a key deliverable identified through the Council Plan.





Developing our Reconciliation Action Plan

The development of Cardinia Shire Council's 2026–28 RAP was shaped by a comprehensive engagement process conducted between February and July 2025.

This included consultation with:

- Traditional Owners and Elders from the Bunurong, Boonwurrung, and Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung peoples
- over 50 Koorie students
- 290+ attendees at First Nations gathering places
- youth services
- health and early years providers
- more than 60 members across Council advisory networks.

Pop-up events, yarning circles, bush food sessions, and online surveys were used to ensure broad and inclusive participation.

From this engagement, we heard clearly about the importance of:

- Respect for culture, heritage, and identity
- Visibility and representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples across the Shire
- Truth-telling and acknowledging shared histories
- Cultural safety in public spaces and services
- Inclusive decision-making and shared leadership
- Health and wellbeing access for First Nations communities
- Youth engagement, employment pathways, and self-determination
- Recognition of Country through dual naming, public art, and storytelling.

The General Manager Community and Planning Services serves as Cardinia Shire Council RAP champion working to embed reconciliation across Council. This in collaboration with Councillors and the RAP Internal Working Group provides for a whole-of-organisation approach where reconciliation is everyone's responsibility.

A dedicated RAP Internal Working Group, comprising managers and staff from across all areas of Council, has led the development of this plan. The group includes:

- Manager Community and Family Services
- Manager People and Culture
- Manager Governance, Safety and Property
- Manager Communications and Engagement
- Manager Arts Advocacy and Economy
- Manager Environment and Heritage
- Manager Active and Connected Communities
- Manager Planning and Design
- Manager Infrastructure Services
- Manager Business Transformation and Customer Service
- Coordinator Procurement and Accounts Payable
- Coordinator Safe and Inclusive Communities
- Coordinator Emergency Management
- Team Leader Community Strengthening
- Community Strengthening Facilitator – Aboriginal Engagement (First Nations representative).

Their collective leadership ensures that reconciliation is embedded across Council departments and services, creating genuine, lasting change.

Cardinia Shire Council acknowledges that reconciliation is a journey that requires listening, action, and accountability. We will continue to work closely with Traditional Owners and First Nations communities and partners in the delivery of this RAP.

We are committed to walking alongside Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to build a future that honours their rights, voices, and connection to Country.

Our third RAP signals our continued drive to create a Shire where all people belong, and where the cultures and contributions of First Nations peoples are visible, valued, and respected.





Relationships



As the population of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders continues to grow in Cardinia Shire, we are committed to fostering trust through genuine relationships with local Registered Aboriginal parties, Traditional Custodians, Aboriginal Controlled Services, Stakeholders and Community Organisations.

By building trust and understanding through reconciliation, we foster a collaborative environment that supports the wellbeing of the communities who live, work and connect within the shire.

The Relationships focus area aligns with the Council Plan 2025-29 strategic objective: Thriving Communities and within the Community Vision 2040.

The programs, facilities and places that we support are safe, inclusive, and enhance participation, wellbeing and resilience.

- With our many partner agencies and community groups, we promote community wellbeing, resilience, and a strong sense of belonging across our diverse and multicultural municipality.
- We provide opportunities for meaningful engagement and expression, support volunteerism, and maintain safe and accessible places and spaces.

Action	Deliverables	Timeline	Responsibility
1. Establish and maintain mutually beneficial relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and organisations.	Meet with local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and organisations to develop guiding principles for future engagement.	December 2026	Manager Community and Family Services
	Develop and implement an engagement plan to work with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and organisations.	June 2027	Manager Community and Family Services
	Establish partnerships with Aboriginal community-controlled organisations to deliver the Cardinia Shire First Nations Connection and Culture Program aimed at strengthening community connection and cultural identity as well as supporting early engagement and intervention with culturally appropriate support services.	June 2027	Manager Community and Family Services
	Work collaboratively with Aboriginal Gathering Places in neighbouring Municipalities to support access to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander programs and services for residents living in Cardinia Shire in particular school holiday programs.	November 2026	Manager Community and Family Services
	Continue to work with the local Koorie Engagement Support Officers and Marrung Steering Committee to support the delivery of cultural programs that focus on leadership skills and cultural connection for young First Nations people living within Cardinia Shire.	February 2028	Manager Community and Family Services
	Engage First Nations residents, artists and organisations co create and lead cultural education and celebration opportunities.	June 2026, 2027	Manager Community and Family Services
	Promote Aboriginal Controlled Community Organisations services to community through Cardinia Support website.	June 2026, 2027	Manager Community and Family Services

Action	Deliverables	Timeline	Responsibility
	Integrate consistent guidance principles for engaging with Registered Aboriginal Parties and First Nations stakeholders within Council's relevant strategies and processes to support staff across the organisation in understanding when and how to engage appropriately.	December 2026, 2027	Manager Communications and Engagement
	Investigate the formation of a First Nations led, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Advisory Group or RAP Advisory Group in Cardinia Shire.	December 2026	Manager Community and Family Services
2. Build relationships through celebrating National Reconciliation Week (NRW).	Circulate Reconciliation Australia's NRW resources and reconciliation materials to our staff.	May 2026, 2027	Manager Communication and Engagement
	RAP Internal Working Group members to participate in an external NRW event.	27 May – 3 June, 2026, 2027	General Manager Community and Planning Services
	Encourage and support staff and senior leaders to participate in at least one external event to recognise and celebrate NRW.	27 May – 3 June, 2026, 2027	General Manager Community and Planning Services
	Organise at least one NRW event each year.	27 May – June, 2026, 2027	Manager Community and Family Services
	Register all our NRW events on Reconciliation Australia's NRW website.	May 2026, 2027	Manager Community and Family Services
	Support local school leaders and Koorie students to attend NRW events.	27 May – 3 June, 2026, 2027	Manager Community and Family Services

Action	Deliverables	Timeline	Responsibility
3. Promote reconciliation through our sphere of influence.	Develop and implement a staff engagement strategy to raise awareness of reconciliation across our workforce.	December 2026	Manager People and Culture
	Participate in inter-council reconciliation networking to share opportunities and ideas across local government networks.	June 2026	Manager Community and Family Services
	Communicate our commitment to reconciliation publicly.	May-June 2026, 2027	Manager Communications and Engagement
	Explore opportunities to positively influence our external stakeholders to drive reconciliation outcomes.	March 2026, 2027	General Manager Community and Planning Services
	Collaborate with RAP organisations and other like-minded organisations to develop innovative approaches to advance reconciliation.	December 2026	Manager Community and Family Services
	Provide staff and community opportunities to build knowledge of First Peoples histories through shared truths recorded by the Yoorrook Justice Commission.	June 2026	Manager Community and Family Services
	Review and update staff induction content to ensure it aligns with RAP outcomes.	August 2026	Manager People and Culture

Action	Deliverables	Timeline	Responsibility
4. Promote positive race relations through anti-discrimination strategies.	Conduct a review of HR policies and procedures to identify existing anti-discrimination provisions, and future needs.	June 2026	Manager People and Culture
	Develop, implement, and communicate an anti-discrimination policy for our organisation.	June 2026	Manager People and Culture
	Engage with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff and/or Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander advisors to consult on our anti-discrimination policy.	June 2026	Manager People and Culture
	Educate senior leaders on the effects of racism.	December 2026	Manager People and Culture
	Support bystander training for community groups, schools, sporting clubs and services within Cardinia shire	December 2026	Manager Community and Family Services





Respect



Cardinia Shire Council recognises that genuine respect for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, heritage, knowledge, and rights is essential to reconciliation and our core business. We are committed to fostering cultural understanding, appreciation, and ongoing learning across all areas of our organisation.

Through visible recognition, celebration of culture, and the promotion of cultural safety, we aim to build a community where Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples feel valued and heard; by embedding cultural protocols and truth-telling into our practices, we acknowledge the strength and resilience of First Nations communities and support their ongoing self-determination. We strive to build a respectful environment for all.

Action	Deliverables	Timeline	Responsibility
5. Increase understanding, value and recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, histories, knowledge and rights through cultural learning.	Conduct a review of cultural learning needs within our organisation.	December 2026	Manager People and Culture
	Consult local Traditional Owners and/or Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander advisors to inform our cultural learning strategy.	December 2026	Manager People and Culture
	Develop, implement, and communicate a cultural learning strategy document for our staff.	June 2027	Manager People and Culture
	Provide opportunities for RAP Working Group members, HR managers and other key leadership staff to participate in formal and structured cultural learning.	July 2026	Manager People and Culture
	Celebrate Wurundjeri Week: Collaborate with the Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation to deliver activities during Wurundjeri Week that celebrate and promote understanding of Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung histories, culture, and ongoing connection to Country.	August 2026, 2027	Manager Community and Family Services
	Work in partnerships with Yarra Ranges in delivering education and cultural opportunities for community.	December 2026	Manager Community and Family Services
	Build an online Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander page on Councils intranet where employees can access information about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures.	June 2026	Manager Community and Family Services
	Update and improve information on Councils public website to support residents access information about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures.	June 2026	Manager Community and Family Services

Action	Deliverables	Timeline	Responsibility
	Identify and facilitate opportunities for employees to attend events and workshops that increase awareness and understanding in cultural sensitivity in working with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders.	August 2026, 2027	Manager People and Culture
	Develop an online training module accessible to staff and community with information on our Registered Aboriginal Parties and reconciliation.	June 2026	Manager Community and Family Services
	Provide opportunities for the broader community to connect with and learn about First Nations histories and cultures in Cardinia Shire through Councils communication channels, art, community and open spaces.	August 2026	Manager Community and Family Services
	Promote culturally significant areas within the shire to Cardinia residents, highlighting opportunities to engage with Cultural walks, interpretive signage, and other Indigenous cultural initiatives.	June 2026	Manager Communication and Engagement
	Identify and provide a culturally appropriate information piece and/or small gift to all new citizens at Council Citizenship Ceremonies.	June 2026	Manager Governance, Safety and Property
	Celebrate and elevate First Nations voices, stories and creative expression through the annual arts programme.	February 2028	Manager Arts, Advocacy and Economy
	Review and update the Creative Industries Strategy to strengthen the role of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander arts and culture in fostering cultural learning, enhancing visibility, and deepening community understanding, respect, and recognition of First Nations cultures, histories, knowledge, and rights.	December 2026	Manager Arts, Advocacy and Economy

Action	Deliverables	Timeline	Responsibility
6. Demonstrate respect to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples by observing cultural protocols	Increase staff's understanding of the purpose and significance behind cultural protocols, including Acknowledgement of Country and Welcome to Country protocols.	December 2026	Manager People and Culture
	Develop, implement and communicate a cultural protocol document, including protocols for Welcome to Country and Acknowledgement of Country.	December 2026	Manager People and Culture
	Invite a local Traditional Owner or Custodian to provide a Welcome to Country or other appropriate cultural protocol at significant events each year.	May 2026, 2027	Manager Community and Family Services
	Include an Acknowledgement of Country or other appropriate protocols at the commencement of important meetings.	February 2026	Manager Governance, Safety and Property
	Undertake an audit of Acknowledgement of Country signage across all Council-managed facilities and in consultation with Traditional Owners. Explore integrating signage requirements into Council's building and facility standards to strengthen cultural recognition and inclusivity.	December 2027	Manager Community and Family Services
	Ensure a display of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander flags is at all of Councils staffed facilities to promote cultural inclusivity and recognition.	June 2026	Manager Buildings and Facilities
	In consultation with First Nations communities and Traditional Owners develop a guide to providing culturally welcoming and inclusive spaces.	June 2027	Manager Community and Family Services
	Ensure Councils Integrated Child and Family Centres and Youth Centre are culturally welcoming and inclusive spaces providing culturally appropriate resources in waiting areas.	June 2026	Manager Community and Family Services

Action	Deliverables	Timeline	Responsibility
<p>7. Build respect for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and histories by celebrating NAIDOC Week.</p>	<p>RAP Working Group to participate in an external NAIDOC Week event.</p>	<p>First week in July 2026, 2027</p>	<p>Manager Community and Family Services</p>
	<p>Review HR policies and procedures to remove barriers to staff participating in NAIDOC Week.</p>	<p>December 2026</p>	<p>Manager People and Culture</p>
	<p>Promote and encourage participation in external NAIDOC events to all staff.</p>	<p>First week in July 2026, 2027</p>	<p>Manager Community and Family Services</p>
	<p>In partnership with First Nations residents, artists or organisations provide opportunities for staff and community to participate in NAIDOC week activities.</p>	<p>First week in July 2026, 2027</p>	<p>Manager Community and Family Services</p>
<p>8. Demonstrate respect to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples through appropriate use of traditional languages.</p>	<p>In consultation with Traditional Owners identify opportunities to use local Aboriginal Language (Woi Wurrung, Boonwurrung) in places and spaces across Cardinia Shire.</p>	<p>April 2026</p>	<p>Manager Governance, Safety and Property</p>
<p>9. Demonstrate respect for Traditional Owners through cultural heritage management and on Country and caring for Country initiatives.</p>	<p>Explore opportunities for council to support Caring for Country and Bunurong Forest Garden initiatives.</p>	<p>July 2026, 2027</p>	<p>Manager Environment and Heritage</p>
	<p>Collaborate with Traditional Owner groups to embed Traditional knowledge into future local conservation initiatives.</p>	<p>February 2028</p>	<p>Manager Environment and Heritage</p>
	<p>Work with Bunurong Land Council to identify and deliver training opportunities for staff involved in on-Country works, including those engaged in infrastructure, environmental management, land use, planning, and design.</p>	<p>June 2026</p>	<p>Manager People and Culture</p>





Opportunities



We aim to ensure our organisation provides pathways to support First Nations employment and economic development. By fostering business and leadership education and employment pathways, we support the growth of Aboriginal businesses and the health and wellbeing of their communities.

We are committed to improving access to health and wellbeing services and promoting a strong local identity through opportunities and connection.



Action	Deliverables	Timeline	Responsibility
10. Improve employment outcomes by increasing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander recruitment, retention, and professional development.	Build understanding of current Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staffing to inform future employment and professional development opportunities.	June 2027	Manager People and Culture
	Engage with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff to consult on our recruitment, retention and professional development strategy.	June 2027	Manager People and Culture
	Develop and implement an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander recruitment, retention and professional development strategy.	December 2027	Manager People and Culture
	Advertise job vacancies to effectively reach Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders.	February 2028	Manager People and Culture
	Review HR and recruitment procedures and policies to remove barriers to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander participation in our workplace.	June 2027	Manager People and Culture
	Engage with the National Indigenous Australians Agency (NIAA), Traditional Owners and Land Councils to explore Indigenous Rangers Programs to identify opportunities to apply a new program in Cardinia Shire in the future.	July 2027	Manager Environment and Heritage
11. Increase Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander supplier diversity to support improved economic and social outcomes.	Develop and implement an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander procurement strategy.	June 2026	Coordinator Procurement and Accounts Payable
	Investigate Kinaway Chambers of commerce partnership.	June 2026	Coordinator Procurement and Accounts Payable
	Develop and communicate opportunities for procurement of goods and services from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander businesses to staff.	December 2026	Coordinator Procurement and Accounts Payable

Action	Deliverables	Timeline	Responsibility
	Review and update procurement practices to remove barriers to procuring goods and services from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander businesses.	June 2026	Coordinator Procurement and Accounts Payable
	Develop commercial relationships with Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander businesses.	December 2026	Coordinator Procurement and Accounts Payable
	Review existing procedures for emerging and professional artists to minimize obstacles for First Nations artists, enabling greater opportunities in creative and cultural programs within the Shire.	June 2026	Manager Arts, Advocacy and Economy
	Investigate and review how reconciliation is currently advanced through Councils major contracts, grants and linkages with community.	December 2026	Manager Community and Family Services
12. Facilitate the connection of local First Nations peoples to promote positive social, health, and economic outcomes.	Advocate for the creation of a dedicated Aboriginal gathering place or community space for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples within the Cardinia Shire.	December 2026, 2027	Manager Arts, Advocacy and Economy
	Through promotion and programming activate and support the use of the Kooweerup Regional Health Service Aboriginal meeting place and bush school.	December 2026	Manager Community and Family Services
	Support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families by working in partnership with local Aboriginal organisations, gathering places, and playgroups that provide culturally safe spaces, connection to community, and access to services that strengthen wellbeing and identity.	July 2026	Manager Community and Family Services





Governance



Action	Deliverables	Timeline	Responsibility
13. Establish and maintain an effective RAP Working group (RWG) to drive governance of the RAP.	Maintain Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander representation on the RWG.	March, June, September, December 2026, 2027	General Manager Community and Planning Services
	Establish and apply a Terms of Reference for the RWG.	Review March 2026, 2027	General Manager Community and Planning Services
	Meet at least four times per year to drive and monitor RAP implementation.	March, June, September, December 2026, 2027	General Manager Community and Planning Services
14. Provide appropriate support for effective implementation of RAP commitments.	Define resource needs for RAP implementation.	October 2026, 2027	General Manager Community and Planning Services
	Engage our senior leaders and other staff in the delivery of RAP commitments.	March, June, September, December 2026, 2027	General Manager Community and Planning Services
	Define and maintain appropriate systems to track, measure and report on RAP commitments.	March 2026, 2027	Manager Community and Family Services
	Appoint and maintain an internal RAP Champion from senior management.	March 2026, 2027	General Manager Community and Planning Services

Action	Deliverables	Timeline	Responsibility
15. Build accountability and transparency through reporting RAP achievements, challenges and learnings both internally and externally.	Contact Reconciliation Australia to verify that our primary and secondary contact details are up to date, to ensure we do not miss out on important RAP correspondence.	June 2026	Coordinator Procurement and Accounts Payable
	Contact Reconciliation Australia to request our unique link, to access the online RAP Impact Survey.	December 2026	Coordinator Procurement and Accounts Payable
	Complete and submit the annual RAP Impact Survey to Reconciliation Australia.	June 2026	Manager Arts, Advocacy and Economy
	Report RAP progress to all staff and senior leaders quarterly.	December 2026	Manager Community and Family Services
	Publicly report our RAP achievements, challenges and learnings, annually.	December 2026, 2027	Manager Arts, Advocacy and Economy
	Investigate participating in Reconciliation Australia's biennial Workplace RAP Barometer.	December 2026	Manager Community and Family Services
	Submit a traffic light report to Reconciliation Australia at the conclusion of this RAP.	July 2026	Manager Community and Family Services
16. Continue our reconciliation journey by developing our next RAP.	Register via Reconciliation Australia's website to begin developing our next RAP.	December 2027	Manager Community and Family Services



Published March 2026

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