

6.2.9 Reconciliation Action Plan

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Recommendation(s)

That Council adopts the Cardinia Shire Council's Reconciliation Action Plan and the Statement of Reconciliation and Acknowledgement of Country.

Attachments

1. Cardinia Shire Council Innovate RAP 2022 2023 [6.2.9.1 - 24 pages]
2. Cardinia Shire Acknowledgement of Country [6.2.9.2 - 1 page]

Executive Summary

Cardinia Shire Council have received endorsement from Reconciliation Australia for our next Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) 2022 – 2023.

Based on the recent Victorian Aboriginal Heritage Council (VAHC) review of Registered Aboriginal Party boundaries within Cardinia it is being proposed that Cardinia Shire formally recognise the Bunurong and Wurundjeri traditional owner groups through the RAP, Statement of Reconciliation and Acknowledgement of Country.

Background

Reconciliation Action Plan

In 2015, Council endorsed its first RAP publicly committing to 23 key actions for delivery over the four-year period of 2015–19.

The plan was developed under Reconciliation Australia's Innovate RAP guidelines which encourages organisations to reach their unique reconciliation visions by focusing on aspirational and innovative commitments towards reconciliation.

The next Innovate RAP for Cardinia Shire Council will cover the 1 January 2022 to 31 December 2023 with 21 actions and 72 deliverables, many of which are requirements of endorsement by Reconciliation Australia. The two-year time frame is set by Reconciliation Australia for all Innovate RAPs (Reconciliation Action Plans).

Extensive community consultation took place in 2019 and 2020 which included discussions with all three traditional owner groups, relevant stakeholders, and community members, along with internal departments. Further discussions were held with traditional owner groups and extensive conversations with Reconciliation Australia throughout the first half of 2021.

During June 2021, a decision on disputed land within Cardinia Shire was handed down by the Victorian Aboriginal Heritage Council (VAHC) naming Bunurong and Wurundjeri Traditional Owners as the Registered Aboriginal Parties for our Shire. The VAHC recognised the Boon Wurrung people's connection to land, however they are not recognised as a distinct Registered Aboriginal Party within the municipality. These new boundaries came into effect on July 1, 2021 and required Cardinia Shire Council officers to seek further advice from Reconciliation

Australia and VAHC to further update the RAP to reflect this important change before adoption. These updates have now been completed.

Statement of Reconciliation and Acknowledgement of Country

At a Council briefing in March 2021, it was agreed that it was appropriate to acknowledge all three Traditional Owners active in the Cardinia area being the Wurundjeri, the Bunurong and the Boon Wurrung people in the Statement of Reconciliation and Acknowledgement of Country. The subsequent advice received on the impacts of the VAHC Registered Aboriginal Party decision handed down in June has meant that this could no longer be the case and has been reverted to the existing acknowledgment of the Bunurong and Wurundjeri people that was already in place.

The attached 'Acknowledgment of Country' document includes guidance for Council staff and Councillors on the appropriate acknowledgement practice for our shire.

Policy Implications

Cardinia Shire Council's Reconciliation Action Plan 2021 – 2023 sits within the context of other policies and strategies at global, national, state and local levels. The policies and plans the RAP addresses within Council are listed below.

Cardinia Shire Council Strategic Plans

- Liveability Plan – 2017–2029
- Social Justice and Equity Policy 2019–23
- Child, Youth and Family Strategy – 2017–21
- Ageing Well Strategy 2019–24
- Municipal Emergency Management Plan V1.3
- Biodiversity conservation Strategy

Relevance to Council Plan

1.1 We empower our communities to be healthy, connected and resilient

1.1.1 Plan for, and support the delivery of, accessible health and social services that address critical gaps in provision.

1.1.2 Enrich local identity and opportunities for the community to connect through art, history and cultural expression.

1.1.3 Lead by example in creating an inclusive and welcoming community for all by facilitating community education, capacity building, connection and celebration of our diversity.

2.1 We support the creation of liveable spaces and places

2.1.1 Advocate, plan for and deliver accessible community infrastructure and services that address community need.

3.1 We value our natural assets and support our biodiversity to thrive

3.1.3 Work with community to improve and manage our natural assets, biodiversity and cultural heritage.

3.1.5 Facilitate community stewardship to build preparedness for natural threats.

5.1 We practise responsible leadership

5.1.1 Build trust through meaningful community engagement and transparent decision-making.

Climate Emergency Consideration

N/A

Consultation/Communication

Internal consultation: The development of Cardinia Shire's second RAP began with a review of the first plan. Interviews involving 16 staff (each RAP action holder) were held to learn from the experiences of those involved; what worked well, what did not, what lessons could be shared, and what insight staff wished to offer to aid the development and implementation of the second RAP.

The two stand outs from the review included.

- Feedback that reconciliation should receive high or higher priority across the organisation (80% of respondents).
- The success of the Cultural Awareness training, with feedback saying this had been transformational for many staff. Some staff have also called for more training or workshops that they wish to access with their teams to increase their awareness of local heritage and living culture.

Community Consultation: Representatives of the three Traditional Owner groups including Wurundjeri Tribe Land and Compensation Cultural Heritage Council, the Boon Wurrung Foundation and the Bunurong Land Council were interviewed to find out what was important to them for inclusion and for the future focus. The plan was also informed by Dandenong and Districts Aboriginal Cooperative Ltd (DDACL), Monash Health and Koo Wee Rup Regional Health Service.

The engagement included conversations at a special flag raising event at the Koo Wee Rup Regional Health Service involving Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students from primary and secondary schools, at the DDACL Annual Fun Run event and Toomah Community Centre Neighbour Day.

Additional conversations and input were gained from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families at Bridgewood Primary School, by the student leaders at John Henry Primary School, and seniors from the Meadowvale Retirement Village during a special Reconciliation Week event. The Cardinia Koorie Education Support Officer and residents also influenced the plan.

Further engagement: A further Round of consultation on the draft RAP sought feedback from Traditional owner groups, all other organisations and community members that were involved in the Round 1 engagement process. The draft RAP consultation was also open to the wider community for review and comment.

Feedback on the draft resulted in some small adjustments to the Plan before it was passed onto Reconciliation Australia for review.

Throughout the process of endorsement with Reconciliation Australia, six drafts have been produced each resulting in added actions and alterations. This required us to engage further with internal departments to ensure they would be able to deliver on the required deliverables.

With the VAHC decision in June 2021 further consultation was undertaken with Reconciliation Australia and the VAHC to ensure the RAP was consistent with expectations relating to the changes to registered aboriginal parties. Updates were undertaken to clearly define Cardinia

Shire's Traditional Custodians with additional consultation undertaken with Bunurong post decision to ensure they were satisfied with the updated document.

The RAP has now been endorsed by Reconciliation Australia and we now seek Council endorsement.

Financial and Resource Implications

The preparation of the RAP was undertaken within current operating budgets. Some future RAP actions will require additional staff time and resources to implement including the process to develop the next RAP which will begin in late 2022. To provide the required support in this area it has been proposed to reallocate a currently vacant role within the Community Strengthening team to work specifically on the RAP and the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander portfolio.

Conclusion

The Reconciliation Action Plan is the key document in creating ongoing, sustainable, positive change for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community members connected to Cardinia Shire.

The Statement of Reconciliation contained within the RAP and the accompanying Acknowledgement to Country form an important part of Council's commitment to recognition of and support for our First Nation Peoples.

Cardinia Shire Council



Innovate Reconciliation Action Plan January 2022– December 2023

Prepared by:

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Community Strengthening Team

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Acknowledgments

Cardinia Shire Council wishes to thank all those who have contributed to the development of Council's second Reconciliation Action Plan. Imagining together is the root of good planning and collective action, so thank you to everyone who has shared their ideas, aspirations and real-world advice with Council.

Particular thanks go our two Traditional Owner groups being the Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung Cultural Heritage Council and the Bunurong Land Council.

We also received input and feedback from the the Boon Wurrung Foundation and respectfully acknowledge their contribution.

We acknowledge the important role which will be played by the Southern Melbourne Area Aboriginal Governance Committee and thank members for committing to working with Council to meet particular actions in our second Reconciliation Action Plan.

We also thank staff from the Dandenong and Districts Aboriginal Cooperative, Monash Health and Koo Wee Rup Regional Health Service and look forward to strengthening relationships and working closely together.

We extend sincere thanks to local resident and advocate Anni Cockburn, who has been a key collaborator and advisor throughout our community conversations, and to the Indigenous Policy Officer team from the City of Port Phillip.

We appreciate the guidance and input of staff from the Department of Education and Training, along with local Elders with whom we've spoken. Particular thanks to families, students and community groups connected with Bridgewood Primary School, John Henry Primary School, Koo Wee Rup primary and secondary schools, Casey Cardinia Libraries, Toomah Community Centre, Meadowvale Retirement Village and Pakenham Scouts, along with Council staff who have been so keen to talk about what reconciliation means to them and how they would like to be involved in ongoing reconciliation efforts.

Many more conversations need to happen as we build relationships in our community and we view those had so far as just a start.

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Message from the Mayor

It is with great pride that Cardinia Shire Council presents its *Reconciliation Action Plan 2021-23* (RAP). This plan is a significant step forward in our commitment to reconciliation and forging stronger connections with Traditional Owner groups and Cardinia's wider Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community.

This, our second RAP, builds on the vision and ambitions of our *Reconciliation Action Plan 2015-19* by focusing our efforts on further developing valuable relationships and opportunities through partnership with our local Traditional Owners, Aboriginal controlled organisations and services, and the local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community. Discussions with Traditional Owner groups in our shire and local community members has seen a number of key themes emerge that are reflected in this plan – a desire for increased cultural recognition, connection and relationship building, and for culturally specific and relevant service partnerships to be developed and delivered locally.

The plan focuses on the three pillars – relationships, respect and opportunities. Put simply, our ongoing commitment to reconciliation is reflected in this plan through specific and tangible actions that focus on fostering positive relationships, respect and opportunities.

The 21 key actions in this plan will focus on creating new opportunities that meet the needs of our changing and growing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. This will be achieved through further opportunities to connect with culture and each other, and greater access to culturally specific programs and services locally.

The development of this plan builds on our commitment to develop ongoing positive relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities to promote understanding and respect across the wider Cardinia community.

It aims to increase recognition and awareness of the rich cultural legacy of our shire, focussing on opportunities to strengthen connections, promote cultural exchanges, spark deep conversations and gain insight into different contemporary Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural experiences.

The plan is underpinned by strategies in Council's *Council Plan 2021-25* that are aimed at supporting community health, connection and sustainability.

At Cardinia Shire Council, we are committed to continuing to build and strengthen relationships with Traditional Owners and Custodians along with local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. It is an honour to live in a country with over 65,000 years of human occupation and as such it is important that we recognise and pay our respects to Cardinia Shire's Elders, past and present, while also acknowledging the important role that each of our three Traditional Owner groups continue to play in our community.

We look forward to further strengthening these ties in the coming years and we will continue to actively seek opportunities to increase local connections.

Cr Jeff Springfield
Cardinia Shire Mayor 2022

Our business

Cardinia Shire is located approximately 55 kilometres south-east of Melbourne CBD and is home to an estimated 112,000 people from 117 different cultures. This includes 780 residents who identify as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander based on 2016 Census data, which in 2021 is estimated to be at least 1,000 residents.

When presented as a proportion of the overall population, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people now make up nearly 1% of the Cardinia Shire population, double the proportion recorded 10 years ago. This increase is higher in Cardinia than the average across interface councils, Greater Melbourne and Victoria. Currently Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander representation within the staff base is at 0.4% with at least 2 staff identifying as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander according to internal staff surveying as cultural identification is not currently an element of our recruitment process.

Cardinia Shire Council employs more than 500 staff and provides a broad range of community services, programs and activities, as well as infrastructure renewal and development to promote, develop and improve the wellbeing and prosperity of our growing community. Council operates from its municipal building at 20 Siding Avenue, Officer. We work with all community members – from newborn babies and young people to families and seniors – and across business, industry and non-profit organisations. We are committed to building a sustainable shire for present and future generations to enjoy. We work with the community and continue to balance the demands of meeting our financial responsibilities and addressing identified challenges, such as managing growth while maintaining our diverse rural communities. Council delivers a diverse range of activities and initiatives with 66 major service categories, each of which contributes to achieving Council's vision as set out in our *Council Plan*.

Our vision

Cardinia Shire will be developed in a planned manner to enable present and future generations to live healthy and productive lives and to enjoy the richness of the diverse and distinctive characteristics of the shire.

Our commitment

Council will provide leadership, including community engagement with stakeholders, to ensure the long-term sustainability of our communities and townships. We will be mindful of the social, environmental and economic impacts of our decisions and ensure future generations benefit from our decisions. We will practise good governance and meet recognised standards of excellence. Council will work diligently to achieve excellence in every aspect of our activities.

Our RAP – Reconciliation vision and statement of commitment

Vision

Cardinia Shire Council's vision for reconciliation is a community that is welcoming, inclusive and respectful, promoting mutual respect and understanding of First Nations Australians, their history and culture in our community.

In the context of our organisation this represents increased partnerships with Traditional Owners and other First Nations people, organisations and residents in order to increase equity, community cultural connection, positive health outcomes, leadership opportunities and self-determination.

At a Cardinia Shire Council meeting on 18 February 1997, Council made a Statement of Reconciliation that was sent to the Council for Aboriginal Reconciliation in support of the Australian Reconciliation Convention. This has now been updated to bring this in line with our second RAP.

Statement of commitment

The Cardinia Shire Council Statement of Reconciliation confirms Council:

- recognises the Bunurong and Wurundjeri people as the traditional custodians of the Cardinia region.
- acknowledges the right of Aboriginal, and indeed all Australians, to live according to their own values and customs, subject to law.
- commits Cardinia Shire Council to respecting Aboriginal sacred sites, special places and objects
- supports the reconciliation process which promotes mutual respect and understanding of the Aboriginal peoples and of all ethnic groups and their history and culture in our community.

First Reconciliation Action Plan

In 2015, Council embarked on its first *Reconciliation Action Plan*, publicly committing to 23 key actions for delivery over the four-year period 2015–19.

The plan was developed under Reconciliation Australia's Innovate RAP guidelines which encourages organisations to reach their unique reconciliation visions by focusing on aspirational and innovative commitments towards reconciliation.

Key feature of this model include the following:

- Developing relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders which are mutually beneficial to both parties.
- Implementing organisation wide approaches for advancing reconciliation, including staff engagement in reconciliation.
- Recognising the sphere of influence our organisation has in supporting local reconciliation opportunities.
- Developing and delivering pilot reconciliation strategies and initiatives.
- Establish a Reconciliation Action Plan Working group consisting of shire Cardinia Council managers and staff committed to championing Reconciliation, along with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander residents and service representatives.

At the start of 2019, Council began the review process of its first RAP while concurrently embarking on conversations in the community to identify what opportunities people felt we could focus on to enhance our efforts as we move forward in our reconciliation journey.

Our second RAP

While Cardinia Shire Council's first RAP was rightfully ambitious, covering a large suite of focus areas, our second one has consolidated on those efforts in line with advice from Traditional Owners, local Elders and advisors from other councils. The key purpose of Cardinia Shire Council developing this RAP is to provide guidance to our organisation to produce quality outcomes for the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community in our area. We are positioning our efforts on key areas identified through the consultation process.

Our second RAP focuses on creating opportunities for our communities to connect with people, enabling cultural exchanges, deep conversations and insights into different contemporary Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural experiences. It also aims to increase public recognition of the rich cultural legacy in this area. It also recognises the importance of creating opportunities for current Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff to be offered access to professional development and leadership pathways.

Reconciliation Australia reminds us that the aim of reconciliation is the promotion of respect, trust and positive relationships between the wider Australian community and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

An important outcome of Cardinia Shire Council's first RAP was providing opportunities for cultural awareness training for staff, ensuring they gained an understanding of history from a Victorian Aboriginal perspective. It increased staff's exposure to and recognition of the ongoing impact of past government policies.

In developing the actions for our second plan, we referred closely to this aim and to Reconciliation Australia's five dimensions of reconciliation, which are:

- race relations
- equality and equity
- unity
- institutional integrity
- historical acceptance.

Since 2018 and throughout 2019, we have been speaking with Cardinia's Traditional Owner groups, the Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung Cultural Heritage Council and the Bunurong Land Council. Consultation was also undertaken with Boon Wurrung Foundation as well as local families, students, community members and a range of service providers. It is through these meetings and discussions that we started to see key themes emerge focused on a desire among people (including non-Indigenous people) to see increased cultural recognition, connection and relationship building, and for culturally specific and relevant service partnerships to be developed and delivered locally.

As themes became apparent, they were shared with Council staff who expressed their aspirations for reconciliation, identifying how these could jointly be considered through our services. This has resulted in the development of the actions presented here. Council is committed to supporting staff across the organisation in delivering the plan actions and sharing network opportunities.

We will take the time over the next 2 years to build significant and strong relationships with our local Traditional Owners, growing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population and key regional support services.

Reconciliation and community wellbeing

Reconciliation means vastly different things to different people, and our early community conversations during the development of Council's second Reconciliation Action Plan have highlighted a broad range of different interpretations, aspirations and considerations. Alongside this has been a strong willingness to support reconciliation efforts and to connect with and pay respect to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures.

Council recognises self-determination is crucial as we move forward. Respecting that this may occur in distinctly different ways to how Council is used to doing business, forms part of this recognition. This Reconciliation Action Plan commits us to building relationships, to talking with and listening deeply to people's hopes and aspirations for the future, including how they wish to connect to culture, influence attitudes and decision making, and actively participate in community life.

As the closest tier of government to community, councils serve a unique role in being able to work in close partnership with individuals and community groups to advocate for opportunities and make change happen. In our shire, we see this through the adoption of our 'services for success' model, which commits us to working together for the future of our community.

Our service attraction philosophy encourages a collaborative approach for future service provision across all sectors and invites and values service providers in working with us to support our growing community's health and wellbeing. Cardinia's *Liveability Plan 2017–29* (Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan) sets the strategic direction for improving health and wellbeing across the shire over the coming decade. Its development was strengthened by having the Dandenong and Districts Aborigine's Co-operative join other partners as active voices in the plan's development.

Talking about what reconciliation means is *very important*, and National Reconciliation Week provided an opportunity to meet with seniors in our community at one of Cardinia Shire's retirement villages for an acknowledgment event over afternoon tea. *Much discussion occurred* and the breadth of people's experience was a great reminder about what reconciliation means and how people want to be involved.

Community snapshot

Cardinia Shire is located in the south-east of Melbourne and is one of 10 'interface councils' around the perimeter of metropolitan Melbourne. The shire's primary urban centre is Pakenham (55 kilometres from Melbourne's CBD).

The shire has a large rural population with 27 rural townships outside the urban growth area, resulting in unique service provision issues. Our residential population for 2018 was 107,120¹. These figures will grow significantly over the next 10–20 years, as currently six families are moving into Cardinia Shire each day. Our community is primarily characterised by young families; however, in line with the national trend, our population is increasingly ageing. Over the next 10 years, forecasts for Cardinia Shire indicate a 74.3% increase in population under working age, a 57.5% increase in population of retirement age and a 54.4% increase in our working age population.

When presented as a proportion of the overall population, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people now make up nearly 1% of Cardinia Shire's population, which is double the proportion recorded a decade ago. This increase rate is higher than the average across interface councils, Greater Melbourne and Victoria. By comparison, in neighbouring City of Casey, the proportion of the population who are Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander has remained relatively stable over the past decade. The 2016 ABS Census data identified Cardinia had almost 800 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander residents, while Casey had double this at 1,600. Our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population aged over 50 years of age grew by 200% in the past decade. While Cardinia has

¹ ABS Estimated Resident Population as sourced at <https://profile.id.com.au/cardinia/population>

workforce parity numbers, our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population are working longer into life than the shire's non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population.

As our communities expand and new neighbourhoods develop, so do the services within them, including schools, kindergartens and community hubs. Council is a partner of the Early Years Compact (an agreement between the Victorian Government and local government) which promotes cultural connection and early start kinder opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children.

As detailed in our *RAP 2021–23* actions, Council will focus on creating new opportunities which meet the needs of our changing and growing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population, specifically through increased local opportunities to connect with culture, meet one another, and access culturally specific programs and services. We will also support opportunities for our broader population to build respect, understanding, trust and positive relationships with Australia's First Peoples. We still have a lot to learn and we seek active partnerships to do so together.

Reconciliation cannot correct the many wrongs that past policies and practises have had on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, cultures and practices but it can provide opportunities for our community to unite and to build respect, trust and positive relationships into the future.

Focus area 1: Relationships

Council will continue working with Traditional Owner representative groups in the shire and seek opportunities for increased and rewarding local community connections to be built with them.

With a rapidly growing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population across the shire, it's time to invest in building strong relationships, creating opportunities to connect people in together and to increase opportunities for diverse Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander voices to influence Council.

Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
Action 1			
Build relationships through celebrating National Reconciliation Week (NRW).	1.1 Circulate Reconciliation Australia's National Reconciliation Week resources and reconciliation materials to our staff. Eg. Uluru Statement from the Heart	May-June 2022 May-June 2023	Manager Community and Family Services
	1.2 Reconciliation Action Plan Working Group members to participate in an external National Reconciliation Week event.	May-June 2022 May-June 2023	Manager Community and Family Services
	1.3 Encourage and support staff and senior leaders to participate in at least one external event to recognise and celebrate National Reconciliation Week.	May-June 2022 May-June 2023	Manager Community and Family Services
	1.4 Register all our National Reconciliation Week events on Reconciliation Australia's NWR website.	May-June 2022 May-June 2023	Manager Community and Family Services
	1.5 Undertake public flag raisings at Cardinia Shire Council Civic Centre, at on-site events, in partnership with local groups, registered aboriginal parties and services.	May-June 2022 May-June 2023	Manager Community and Family Services
	1.6 Council will work in partnership with local groups or organisations to host an annual National Reconciliation Week event.	June 2022 June 2023	Manager Community and Family Services
	1.7 Council to deliver a National Reconciliation Week function for Councillors and staff in partnership with local groups or organisations.	June 2022 June 2023	Manager Community and Family Services
Action 2			
Promote reconciliation through our sphere of influence.	2.1 Implement strategies to engage our staff in reconciliation.	May-June 2022 May June 2023	Manager Community and Family Services
	2.2 Communicate our commitment to reconciliation publicly.	May-June 2022 May-June 2023	Manager Community and Family Services

Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
	2.3 Explore opportunities to positively influence our external stakeholders to drive reconciliation outcomes.	June 2023	Manager Community and Family Services
	2.4 Collaborate with RAP and other like-minded organisations to develop ways to advance reconciliation.	June 2023	Manager Community and Family Services
Action 3			
Promote positive race relations through anti-discrimination strategies.	3.1 Conduct a review of HR policies and procedures to identify existing anti-discrimination provisions and future needs.	December 2022	Manager People and Culture
	3.2 Develop, implement and communicate an anti-discrimination policy for our organisation.	December 2022	Manager People and Culture
	3.3 Engage with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander advisors to consult on our anti-discrimination policy.	June 2022	Manager People and Culture
	3.4 Educate senior leaders on the effects of racism.	December 2022	Manager People and Culture
Action 4			
Establish and maintain mutually beneficial relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and organisations.	4.1 Meet with local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and organisations to develop guiding principles for future engagement.	June 2022	Manager Community and Family Services
	4.2 Develop and implement an engagement plan to work with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and organisations.	December 2022	Manager Community and Family Services
	4.3 Council staff will work with key Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations, partners and service stakeholders in preparing for, responding to, and recovering from emergencies.	February 2022 February 2023	Team Leader Emergency Management

Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
	4.4 Deliver an increased number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, youth and family services and support groups in the shire, as determined by community need and the Southern Melbourne Area Aboriginal Governance Committee.	June 2022 December 2023	Manager Community and Family Services
	4.5 Work in partnership with Aboriginal housing support services to identify social housing needs and explore opportunities to improve housing outcomes within the Shire.	June 2022 June 2023	Team Leader Community Strengthening
Action 5			
Strengthen relationships with our Traditional Owner Groups.	5.1 Develop individual Memorandum of Understandings (MOUs) between Cardinia Shire Council and The Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung Cultural Heritage Council and the Bunurong Land Council.	June 2022	Manager Community and Family Services
Action 6			
Leadership commit to support the Reconciliation Action Plan.	6.1 Annual meetings occur between the Traditional Owner Groups and Councillors and senior managers.	June 2022 June 2023	Manager Community and Family Services

Focus area 2: Respect

Our consultations have highlighted a keen interest among local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families and the broader community to access and participate in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural celebrations, events, recognition and learning opportunities. Our second Reconciliation Action Plan enables this to occur.

Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
Action 7			
Demonstrate respect to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples by observing cultural protocols.	7.1 Increase staff understanding of the purpose and significance behind cultural protocols, including <i>Acknowledgement of Country</i> and <i>Welcome to Country</i> protocols.	June 2022	Manager Community and Family Services
	7.2 Develop, implement and communicate a cultural protocol document, including protocols for <i>Welcome to Country</i> and <i>Acknowledgement of Country</i> .	March 2022	Manager Community and Family Services
	7.3 Invite local Traditional Owner or Custodian groups to provide a <i>Welcome to Country</i> or other appropriate cultural protocol at significant events each year.	January 2022 December 2023	Manager Community and Family Services
	7.4 Include an <i>Acknowledgement of Country</i> or other appropriate protocols at the commencement of important meetings and yarning circles.	January 2022 December 2023	Manager Community and Family Services
ACTION 8			
Provide opportunities for the community to engage with and celebrate Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures during NAIDOC Week.	8.1 Annual in-kind resource support will be provided for local NAIDOC in-school programs and community partnership events.	July 2022 July 2023	Manager Community and Family Services
	8.2 The Reconciliation Action Plan Working Group will participate in an external NAIDOC week event.	July 2022 July 2023	Manager Community and Family Services
	8.3 Council will review HR policies and procedures to remove barriers to staff participating in NAIDOC Week and NAIDOC Week events.	May 2022	Manager Community and Family Services

Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
	8.4 Council will promote and encourage participation in external NAIDOC events to all staff.	July 2022 July 2023	Manager Community and Family Services
Action 9			
Increase capacity for protection and awareness of culturally significant sites and assets.	9.1 Link Traditional Owners and volunteer groups to gain input to bushland reserve works plans.	June 2022 June 2023	Manager Environment and Heritage
	9.2 Identify cultural heritage sites and assets in the shire and methods to obtain this information, to create a database of local information, i.e. through site visits and review access to the Victorian Aboriginal Heritage Register.	June 2022 June 2023	Manager Environment and Heritage
Action 10			
Engage Councillors, staff and community volunteers in cultural learning opportunities to increase understanding of the history, cultures and achievements of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.	10.1 Cultural awareness training: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • deliver twice per annum for all staff to access in face-to-face workshop format • provide opportunities for specific training to be available, i.e. maternal and child health, councillors and volunteers. 	June 2022 November 2022 June 2023 November 2023	Manager People and Culture
	10.2 Council to conduct a review of cultural learning needs in our organisation including consultation with local Traditional Owners and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander advisors on the development and implementation of a cultural learning strategy.	June 2022	Manager People and Culture
	10.3 Develop, implement and communicate the Cultural Learning Strategy to all Council staff.	December 2022	Manager People and Culture
	10.4 Council to provide opportunities for the Reconciliation Action Plan Working Group members, HR managers and other key leadership staff to participate in formal and structured cultural learning.	June 2022 November 2022 June 2023 November 2023	Manager People and Culture

Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
	10.5 Develop and deliver a cultural development project exploring history, impacts and stories related to colonisation and its legacy in Cardinia Shire.	Dec 2022	Manager Community and Family Services
Action 11			
Support the protection and recognition of the traditional languages of the local area.	11.1 Promote the use of local Aboriginal languages (Woiwurrung and Bunurong) both internally and publicly for the naming and renaming of various Cardinia Shire features and localities, in line with Traditional Owner advice.	December 2022 December 2023	Manager Governance
	11.2 Develop best practice guidelines for naming and renaming features and localities using local Aboriginal languages (Woiwurrung and Bunurong).	December 2022	Manager Governance
Action 12			
Support opportunities for residents to increase access to education and cultural awareness by connecting with Traditional Owners and other Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations	12.1 Include Aboriginal interpretation opportunities at Deep Creek Reserve.	December 2022	Manager Environment and Heritage
	12.2 Engage and work with Traditional Owner groups to develop a suite of signs to be placed in public parks and locations of cultural significance to the local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.	December 2022	Coordinator Recreation
	12.3 The Maternal and Child Health team provide relevant Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander specific information and promotional materials and imagery across 18 child and family centre consulting rooms to assist them to become culturally welcoming and safe.	June 2022 December 2023	Coordinator Maternal and Child Health

Focus area 3: Opportunities

Cardinia Shire Council will develop strategic partnerships with local and regional organisations to support increased Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment participation. Youth leadership will be another focus, as will increasing local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander public arts and culture events.

Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
Action 13			
Increase Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander supplier diversity to support improved economic and social outcomes.	13.1 Develop and implement an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander procurement strategy to remove barriers to procurement.	December 2022	Manager Finance
	13.2 Investigate a Supply Nation membership.	December 2022	Manager Finance
	13.3 Communicate and promote available goods from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander businesses to staff.	December 2022	Manager Finance
	13.4 Develop commercial relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander businesses.	December 2022	Manager Economic Development
	13.5 Review and update procurement practices to remove barriers to procuring goods and services from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander businesses.	December 2022	Manager Economic Development
Action 14			
Host Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander arts and cultural events and provide performance development opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander artists.	14.1 Promote both internally and externally Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Community Festival and Event opportunities and support applicants throughout the Council grant application and event delivery process.	December 2022 December 2023	Team Leader Community Strengthening
	14.2 Host an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander music event with associated interactive cultural activities as part of the Summer Music Series at Emerald Lake Park.	February 2022 February 2023	Coordinator Arts and Creative Industries
	14.3 Program Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander content within the performing arts program and the annual public film program.	December 2022 December 2023	Coordinator Arts and Creative Industries
	14.4 Program Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander	December 2022	Manager Arts and Culture

Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
	exhibitions in the new Cardinia Culture Centre arts space.		
Action 15			
Improve employment outcomes by increasing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander recruitment, retention and professional development.	15.1 Establish partnerships with regional organisations to effectively enhance Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment opportunities and support at a local level.	December 2022	Manager People and Culture
	15.2 Review Council's recruitment policies to offer identification of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander applicants and commit to personalised recruitment response.	December 2022	Manager People and Culture
	15.3 Build understanding of current Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staffing to inform future employment and professional development opportunities. Engage with these staff to consult on the development and implementation of a recruitment, retention and professional development strategy.	June 2022	Manager People and Culture
	15.4 Develop and implement an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander recruitment, retention and professional development strategy.	June 2022	Manager People and Culture
	15.5 Review HR recruitment procedures and policies to remove barriers to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander participation in our workplace.	June 2022	Manager People and Culture
	15.6 Advertise job vacancies to effectively reach Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders.	December 2022 December 2023	Manager People and Culture
	15.7 Existing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff will be offered opportunities to access professional development and leadership pathways.	December 2022	Manager People and Culture

Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
Action 16			
Increase Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander representation in Youth Council and Youth Services programs.	16.1 Council to facilitate one of the nine Youth Council positions to be filled by an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander young person who meets the criteria, with appropriate support systems identified and implemented.	December 2022 December 2023	Coordinator Youth Services
	16.2 Maintain Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people represented on the Youth Strategic Action Group.	December 2022 December 2023	Coordinator Youth Services
ACTION 17			
Advocate for increased local services and supports to be offered in Cardinia Shire to meet Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander resident needs.	17.1 With respect for self-determination, Council will work with regional Aboriginal Controlled services and the Southern Melbourne Area Aboriginal Governance Committee to encourage more Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander services and supports into the shire.	December 2022	Manager Community and Family Services

Focus area 4: Leadership, implementation, tracking and progress reporting -

Building on Council's first Reconciliation Action Plan, we will increase organisational efforts to champion recognition and opportunities to embed change through reconciliation. This is evident in the actions below, which detail how we intend to deliver the plan and our reporting steps.

Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
Action 18			
Provide appropriate support for effective implementation of the Reconciliation Action Plan commitments.	18.1 Define resource needs for the Reconciliation Action Plan implementation.	March 2022	Manager Community and Family Services
	18.2 Engage our senior leaders and other staff in the delivery of the Reconciliation Action Plan commitments.	January 2022	Manager Community and Family Services
	18.3 Define and maintain appropriate systems to track, measure and report on the Reconciliation Action Plan commitments.	June 2022	Manager Customer and Service Improvement
	18.4 Appoint and maintain an internal Reconciliation Action Plan champion from senior management.	January 2022	Manager Community and Family Services
ACTION 19			
Continue our reconciliation journey by developing our next Reconciliation Action Plan.	19.1 Register via Reconciliation Australia's website to begin developing out next Reconciliation Action Plan.	June 2022	Manager Community and Family Services
ACTION 20			
Annual Reporting against Reconciliation Action Plan Actions are provided to the public, partners, senior leadership team, Council, and Reconciliation Australia.	20.1 Report the Reconciliation Action Plan achievements to Council's senior leadership team, all Council staff, Traditional Owner Groups and the wider community.	Quarterly across RAP period	Manager Community and Family Services
	20.2 Report Reconciliation Action Plan achievements to Council and provide public updates in line with National Reconciliation Week each year.	May 2022 May 2023	Manager Community and Family Services
	20.3 Submit annual Reconciliation Action Plan Impact Measurement Questionnaire to Reconciliation Australia.	September 2022 September 2023	Manager Community and Family Services

Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
	20.4 Investigate participating in Reconciliation Australia's biennial Workplace Reconciliation Action Plan Barometer.	May 2022	Manager Community and Family Services
Action 21			
Establish and maintain Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) Working Group to actively support RAP development and implementation of actions, tracking progress and reporting.	21.1 The Working Group will meet quarterly.	From January 2022	Manager Community and Family Services
	21.2 Maintain Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander representation on the Reconciliation Action Plan Working Group.	January 2022	Manager Community and Family Services
	21.3 Establish and apply a terms of reference for the Reconciliation Action Plan Working Group.	March 2022	Manager Community and Family Services

Planning for change -

Cardinia Shire Council's ongoing commitment to reconciliation is reflected in planned actions focusing on increased relationships, respect and opportunities. These will be driven by leadership commitments advocating for increasing culturally appropriate local services as reflected in the *Reconciliation Action Plan 2022–23*.

The development of the *Reconciliation Action Plan 2022–23* is the continuation of a commitment by Council to promoting respect, trust and positive relationships between the shire's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and the wider Cardinia community.

The plan is underpinned by multiple strategies in the *Council Plan 2021–25* that link to the delivery of our RAP through the following priority areas.

Council Plan 2021–25

We empower our communities to be healthy, connected and resilient	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plan for, and support the delivery of, accessible health and social services that address critical gaps in provision. • Enrich local identity and opportunities for the community to connect through art, history and cultural expression. • Lead by example in creating an inclusive and welcoming community for all by facilitating community education, capacity building, connection and celebration of our diversity.
We support the creation of liveable spaces and places	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advocate, plan for and deliver accessible community infrastructure and services that address community need. • Plan for housing diversity that meets community need, is affordable and delivers environmental sustainability, safety and healthy living outcomes.
We value our natural assets and support our biodiversity to thrive	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with community to improve and manage our natural assets, biodiversity and cultural heritage. • Facilitate community stewardship to build preparedness for natural threats.
We support our productive land and employment land to grow local industries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve local learning and employment pathway opportunities through strategic partnerships.
We practise responsible leadership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Build trust through meaningful community engagement and transparent decision-making

The RAP also aligns to Council's Liveability Plan's vision for a liveable, resilient community where the environment flourishes, residents are healthy, included and connected. It affirms a model of social cohesion fostered through partnership building, improved communication and engagement with the community.

The plan aligns with the principals of Council's new *Social Justice and Equity Policy*, which acknowledges Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as First Australians and recognises their culture, history, diversity and their deep connection to the land. We recognise the legacy of colonisation resulted in widescale dispossession of land, culture and language and has resulted in long-term systemic disadvantage and inequality for many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and communities who continue to experience high levels of racial discrimination and significant disadvantage across multiple social domains. Pivotal to this plan's success will be the range of effective local and regional partnerships we continue to build and the commitment across Council's leadership team and various business units to build strong relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander residents, services, networks, businesses and Aboriginal community-controlled organisations.

Broader policy context

Cardinia Shire Council's second Reconciliation Action Plan provides 21 actions developed to provide focus for the shire's reconciliation priorities. It is important that we acknowledge the excellent Reconciliation Action Plan framework provided by Reconciliation Australia which provided the guide for this 2021–23 action plan. The plan sits within the context of other policies and strategies at global, national, state and local levels, as listed below.

International

- UN Declaration of Human Rights
- UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples

Australian Government

- Australia's Human Rights Framework
- Closing the Gap Strategy 2008

Victorian Government

- *Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006*
- *Equal Opportunity Act 2010*
- Advancing the Treaty Process with Aboriginal Victorians Bill
- Victorian Aboriginal Affairs Framework 2018–23
- Korin Balit-Djak: Aboriginal Health, Wellbeing and Safety Strategic Plan 2017–27
- Aboriginal Family Violence 10 year Plan
- Wungurilwil Gagapduir: Aboriginal Children and Families Agreement and Strategic Action Plan
- Marrung Aboriginal Education Plan 2016–26
- Balit Murrup: Aboriginal Social & Emotional Wellbeing Framework
- Aboriginal Justice Agreement
- Victorian Aboriginal Affairs Framework (VAAF) 2018–2023
- Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006 and 2016 amendment

Local government

- The Victorian *Local Government Act 2020*
- Strategic Priorities of the Early Years Compact
- The Victorian *Aboriginal and Local Government Action Plan 2017*

Cardinia Shire Council Charters

- Age Friendly Charter
- Child Friendly City Charter
- Cardinia Children's Charter

Cardinia Shire Council strategic plans

- Council Plan 2021–25
- Liveability Plan 2017–29
- Social Justice and Equity Policy 2019–23
- Child, Youth and Family Strategy 2017–21
- Ageing Well Strategy 2019–24
- Municipal Emergency Management Plan V1.3
- Biodiversity Conservation Strategy



Cardinia Shire Council
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Email: mail@cardinia.vic.gov.au
Web: www.cardinia.vic.gov.au

National Relay Service (NRS)
TTY: 133 677 (ask for 1300 787 624)
Speak and Listen (speech-to-speech relay): 1300 555 727 (ask for 1300 787 624)

 **Translator Interpretation Service**
131 450 (ask for 1300 787 624)



This plan is developed with support from Reconciliation Australia.

Cardinia Shire Council

Acknowledgment of Country

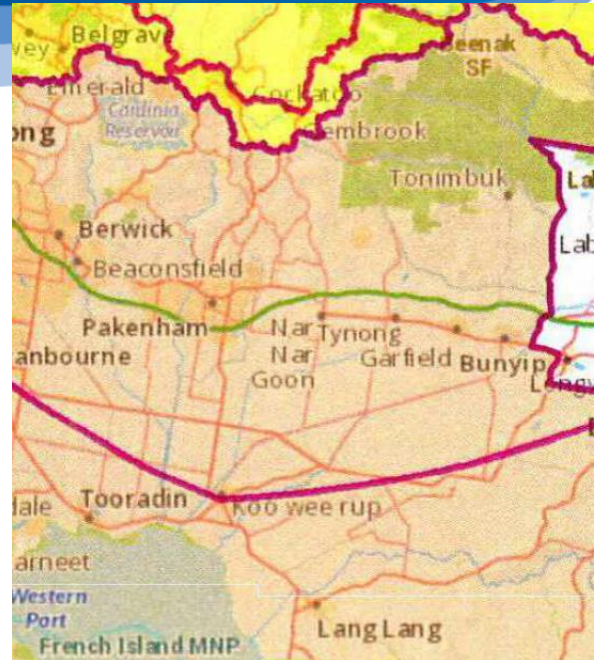


An Acknowledgement of Country is an opportunity for anyone to show respect for Traditional Owners and their continuing contribution and connection to Country. It can be given by both non-Indigenous and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

Cardinia Shire Council has two Registered Aboriginal Parties the Bunurong and Wurundjeri people, decided upon by the Victorian Aboriginal Heritage of Victoria (VAHC).

Map Key: ■ Wurundjeri ■ Bunurong

It is important to note, that unlike an Acknowledgement of Country a formal 'Welcome to Country' can only be delivered by the original custodians of the land where the meeting or event is taking place. This can be organised with either the Bunurong Land Council or the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Cultural Heritage Council.



Acknowledgement of Country statements

Place specific acknowledgement

"I would like to begin by acknowledging the traditional custodians of the country on which we meet, the (Bunurong or Wurundjeri) people, and pay my respects to their Elders, both past and present."

Dependant on the land the acknowledgement is occurring on you should recognise the appropriate Registered Aboriginal Party in the acknowledgement. The map above shows the boundary of each area. If you are unsure please speak to the Community Strengthening Team for advice.

Shire wide acknowledgement

A variation on the above can recognise both traditional owners of Cardinia. Council meetings are an example of where this may be applied.

"I would like to begin by acknowledging the traditional custodians of the lands of Cardinia Shire, the Bunurong and Wurundjeri people, and pay my respects to their Elders, both past and present."

Online acknowledgement

"I would like to begin by acknowledging the traditional custodians of the lands I am joining you from the (your Registered Aboriginal Party), along with the traditional custodians of the various lands on which you all join us from today. I pay my respects to their Elders, both past and present."

You can also provide the opportunity for participants of the online meeting to share their local traditional owner group within the chat as part of your acknowledgment (if you feel this is appropriate).

If you are unsure of the traditional owner group to acknowledge please contact the Community Strengthening team.

The shire wide acknowledgment can also be utilised online.

"I would like to begin by acknowledging the traditional custodians of the lands of Cardinia Shire, the Bunurong and Wurundjeri people, and pay my respects to their Elders, both past and present."

Shire wide website and printed document acknowledgement

"Cardinia Shire Council acknowledges and pays respect to the traditional custodians of these lands the Bunurong and Wurundjeri people."

The above statement should be utilised on Council's Website and any printed material that encompasses the entire Shire.