



INNOVATE RECONCILIATION ACTION PLAN

SEPTEMBER 2024 - AUGUST 2026
WALKING FORWARD TOGETHER

KERANG
COHUNA
KOONDRICK
LAKES DISTRICT
MURRABIT AND DISTRICT
LEITCHVILLE
LALBERT
QUAMBATOOK
MACORNA
TRAGOWEL



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WARNING: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander readers are warned that this Gannawarra Reconciliation Action Plan may contain images of deceased persons.

Cover artwork Gecko by Aunty Esther Kirby OAM purchased by Gannawarra Shire Council in 2006. (Used with family permission for this purpose)



The Gannawarra Shire is on the ancestral lands of the Barapa Barapa, the Wamba Wamba and the Yorta Yorta peoples.

We respectfully acknowledge the people who came before us and cared for this land, the Elders who guide us every day, and our emerging leaders - our children and youth.

IT IS UP TO ALL OF US TO SUPPORT AND NURTURE OUR COMMUNITY FOR FUTURE GENERATIONS.

Artwork *Life's a Risk* by Aunty Esther Kirby OAM purchased by Gannawarra Shire Council in 2009
(Used with family permission for this purpose)

We are proud of our heritage,
our stories,
our sunsets and sunrises,
our beautiful tall gum trees,
the mighty Murray, Loddon and
Avoca riverlands, and waterways.

“WELCOME TO OUR COUNTRY”

Uncle Barry Atkinson, Wamba Wamba
(Used with permission for this purpose)

“Words from Gannawarra Welcome to Country Video”

INNOVATE RAP



Reconciliation Australia commends Gannawarra Shire Council on the formal endorsement of its inaugural 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 Gannawarra 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, Gannawarra 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 close to 3 million people now either working or studying in an organisation with a RAP, the program's potential for impact is greater than ever. Gannawarra Shire Council is part of a strong network of more than 2,500 corporate, government, and not-for-profit organisations that have taken goodwill and intention, and transformed it into action.

Implementing an Innovate RAP signals Gannawarra Shire Council 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 Gannawarra Shire Council on your Innovate RAP and I look forward to following your ongoing reconciliation journey.

Karen Mundine
Chief Executive Officer
Reconciliation Australia

MESSAGE FROM THE MAYOR

Gannawarra Shire Council and its partners acknowledge the Barapa Barapa, Wamba Wamba and Yorta Yorta peoples as the Traditional Custodians of the land that encompasses the Gannawarra Shire, and their enduring relationship with Country.

The Traditional Custodians have cared and nurtured for the Gannawarra area for tens of thousands of years.

Gannawarra Shire Council and its partners recognise Australia's rich cultural heritage and aim to encourage integrated decision making now and into the future.

While Council and its partners have worked closely with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, the important next step of our journey towards reconciliation is the development of this Reconciliation Action Plan.

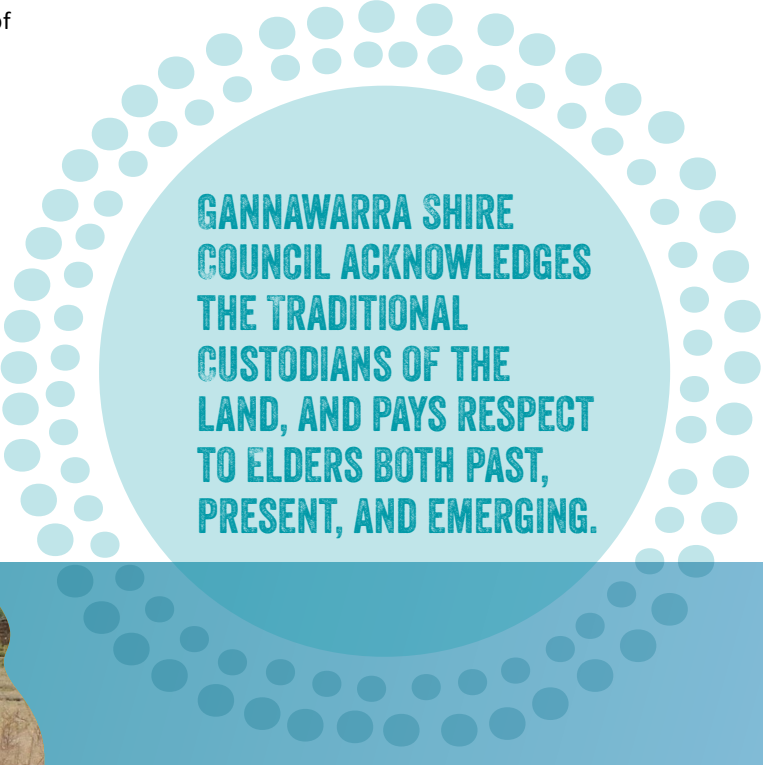
This plan converts good intentions into real actions. It publicly formalises our commitment to reconciliation by identifying clear actions with realistic targets. It aims to embed cultural change within our whole organisation through building good relationships, respecting the special contribution of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, and creating opportunities.

Most importantly, it has been developed in partnership with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, organisations and leaders.

As a partnership we aspire to continue to strengthen relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and support participation in Indigenous cultural processes.

The development of relationships requires all of us to come to terms with our history as we move towards a unified future, in which we understand, value and respect each other.

The values of Relationships, Respect and Opportunities are the foundation on which true Reconciliation stands, and it is these values that will guide Council and its partners through our continued journey towards reconciliation; a journey that requires all of us to walk together with courage.



**GANNAWARRA SHIRE
COUNCIL ACKNOWLEDGES
THE TRADITIONAL
CUSTODIANS OF THE
LAND, AND PAYS RESPECT
TO ELDERS BOTH PAST,
PRESENT, AND EMERGING.**

View the Welcome to Country video at the bottom of Council's homepage.



Photo: Tyipen Kwe Children's Program



Photo: Gannawarra Reconciliation Week Walk

A FUTURE BASED ON RESPECT, HARMONY, AND COLLABORATION.

OUR VISION FOR RECONCILIATION

Gannawarra Shire Council aims to create a municipality where Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and non-Indigenous people can live, thrive and collaborate in respect and harmony.

Council will develop actions that embed cultural change in our organisation through increased mutual understanding and effective partnerships. An investment of time and resources will be made to continue to build on our philosophy of existing trust and respect.

We will strive to improve relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community members by incorporating community

input into decision making and recognising the involvement and contribution from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.

Council recognises the need for representation and protection for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural heritage and will work hard to improve opportunities to acknowledge, celebrate and listen to the voices of all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples that call Gannawarra home.

Council's vision for Reconciliation supports our Community Vision Statement:

Our community will be proud, connected, and inclusive as we actively seek opportunities that enhance lifestyle and liveability.

We will recognise and appreciate the value of the natural environment and how it connects our communities.

We will strive to be resilient to a changing environment through innovation and collaboration.

The Gannawarra will grow through encouraging economic diversity, creating unique tourism destinations, and embracing our cultural and natural assets.

PARTNERSHIPS FOR RECONCILIATION

The following partners have worked together successfully for many years on a journey towards reconciliation.

The relationship between these partners is strong and articulated through a formal Partnership Agreement.

Existing trust and respect, through an investment of time and resources, will continue as together we implement this Innovate Reconciliation Action Plan:

- Kerang Elders and Leaders Group
- Gannawarra Shire Council
- Northern District Community Health
- Kerang Mallee District Aboriginal Service
- Kerang District Health
- Cohuna District Hospital
- Victoria Police



Photo: Aunty Esther Kirby OAM at Leitchville Bush Kinder



Photo: Signing of Gannawarra Partnership Agreement



OUR PARTNERSHIP PRINCIPLES



- Encourage the development of a respect for, and an understanding of, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, histories and cultures, facilitating better relationships between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and the community by performing an Acknowledgement of Country at the beginning of meetings and performing Welcome to Country at special events.
- Communicate the significance of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural heritage and help to promote development of mutual respect and understanding.
- Show respect for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander heritage and the ongoing relationship of the Traditional Owners of the area with the land.
- Communication is a fundamental building block for collaboration and will be honest and timely. Communication will be offered and received in the spirit of co-operation.
- In the spirit of collaboration, partners will acknowledge and honour their different goals or motivations for collaboration by open communication, clarifying agendas and identifying areas of mutuality and divergence.
- All parties are accountable to each other, through transparent processes, fair use of resources, acknowledgement and recognition of each other.
- All parties wish to cooperate to provide welcoming environments at each of the services and foster relationships that improve the health of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.
- The Partnership adheres to the principles espoused by the National Health Agreement on Closing the Gap in Indigenous Health Outcomes and adheres to the principles as set out in Closing the Aboriginal Health Gap Loddon Mallee Strategic Action Plan 2010, all of which recognises that improving the health of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples is a national priority supported by governments at both federal, state and local levels.
- The Partnership acknowledges the principles in the United Nations Declaration on Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

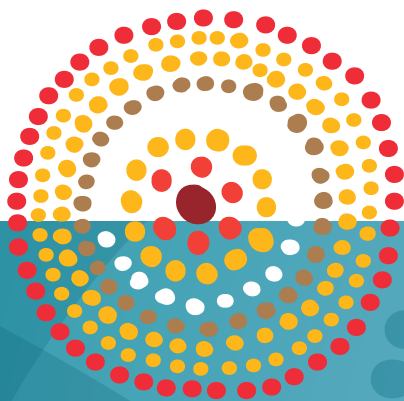


Photo: Gannawarra
Reconciliation Week Walk

ABOUT GANNAWARRA

OUR PEOPLE,
OUR PLACE,
OUR PRIDE.

With an area of 3,736 square kilometres, Gannawarra Shire is bordered by the Murray River to the north east and incorporates a variety of natural environments; rivers, swamps, marshes, and wetlands, all surrounded by majestic forests.

The Barapa Barapa, Wamba Wamba, and Yorta Yorta Aboriginal peoples inhabited the lands that now form the Gannawarra Shire.

The area provided plentiful supplies of fish, roots, plants, grubs, snakes and lizards, goannas, possums, emus, kangaroos, and birds of many kinds. Bark from trees was used for shelter and to make canoes, shields, and containers.

With 57 lakes, swamps and marshes, the Gannawarra region forms one of Australia's largest and most important wetlands.

The significance of local wetlands is internationally recognised through their listing under the Ramsar Convention – the only organisation in the world dedicated to the protection of wetland biodiversity. We are also home to Gunbower Island, the largest inland island in Australia.

The Murray River and its tributaries, along with the Loddon and Avoca rivers weave their way through Gannawarra's unique landscape.

Gannawarra is also a place of strong community pride where our communities motivate and inspire each other to make the Gannawarra a great place to live, visit and do business.

Towns of Gannawarra include Kerang, Cohuna, Koondrook, Lake Charm, Lalbert, Leitchville, Macorna, Murrabit, Mystic Park, and Quambatook.

Gannawarra is home to approximately 268 residents who identify as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander. This is equivalent to 2.5 per cent of Gannawarra Shire's population (2021 Australian Bureau of Statistics Census data). This was an increase of 65 persons from the Census in 2016 and 103 persons from the previous Census in 2011). The percentage of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander persons living in Gannawarra is significantly higher than the state average of 1 per cent.

OUR BUSINESS

Gannawarra Shire Council was gazetted on 20 January 1995. Council is constituted under the Local Government Act 2020 to provide leadership for the good governance of the municipal district and the local community.

Council works in collaboration with State and Federal government, state, regional and local agencies, neighbouring municipalities, and community members.

We deliver more than 300 different services and manages a wide range of public assets and infrastructure to ensure our community enjoy a high quality of life now and into the future.

We focus on inclusive services and assets that enhance the health and wellbeing, cultural heritage, connectivity, and productivity of our communities.

Services include libraries, children services, community health, maternal and child health, arts and culture, community engagement, sport and recreation, marketing and events, economic development and tourism, waste collection and recycling, infrastructure and development, local laws, swimming pools, and a range of customer and corporate services.

Gannawarra is 1.25 hours by car from Bendigo, 40 minutes by car from Swan Hill and 3 hours' drive from Melbourne.

Gannawarra Shire Council and is one of the largest employers in the area employing over 314 employees. Council does not currently collect information on the number of First Nations staff employed. Council will endeavour to collect this information through recruitment processes in a culturally safe way as part of the implementation of this Reconciliation Action Plan.

Our Council Values are Trust, Respect, Innovation and Collaboration.



Artwork by Typen Kwe



The mosaic artwork was designed by Aunty Esther Kirby OAM and created by Aunty Esther, her family, and the staff at Kerang District Health.

The mosaic forms part of Kerang District Health's Indigenous Garden, opened on 14 August 2019.

Puthekaty Lahnangurruk, Kurrek, gunya means:

"Welcome to everyone, our country, our place, our camp fire."

The mosaic depicts the welcome, the warmth and hospitality.

The fire means: welcome and warmth, the stones inside the fire represent the meal.

The blue and white tiles represent the water, hospitality, and refreshment.

The black stones are the family groups of the tribe.

The ochre-coloured stones represent the land we share.

The black tiles on the outside represent the traditional Aboriginal tribes.

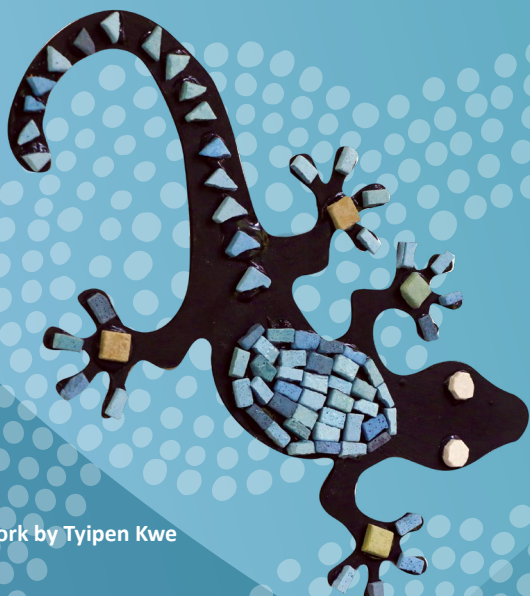
The coloured tiles in amongst the black stones represent other nationalities who have come to share our land.

(Artwork and Story used with family permission for this purpose)

COMMITMENT IN THE GANNAWARRA SHIRE COUNCIL PLAN

OUR COMMUNITY VISION
OUR COMMUNITY WILL BE PROUD,
CONNECTED AND INCLUSIVE AS WE
ACTIVELY SEEK OPPORTUNITIES THAT
ENHANCE LIFESTYLE AND LIVEABILITY.

**WE WILL DEVELOP
AND IMPLEMENT
A RECONCILIATION
ACTION PLAN.**



Artwork by Tyipen Kwe

Photo: Reconciliation Week cultural art activity.

ABORIGINAL ART SYMBOLS



Emu Track / Spear



Rainbow / Cloud



Possum Track



Rain



Star / Sun



Waterhole / Campsite



Fire / Smoke Water



Kangaroo Track



Human Track



Man / Woman

Aboriginal symbols sourced from: <https://therainbowserpent.wordpress.com/stories/aboriginal-symbols/>

OUR JOURNEY TOWARDS RECONCILIATION

Gannawarra Shire Council and individual agencies have a long history of working with local Aboriginal communities. This relationship strengthened in 2013 with the establishment of the Kerang Elders and Leaders Group.

The Kerang Elders and Leaders Group was initially a partnership between Kerang Elders and Council before expanding its membership in 2015 to include Mallee District Aboriginal Services, Northern District Community Health and Victoria Police.

In 2016 the group expanded further to include the North Central Catchment Management Authority, Regional Arts Victoria and the Kerang Local Aboriginal Network, Kerang District Health and Cohuna District Hospital.

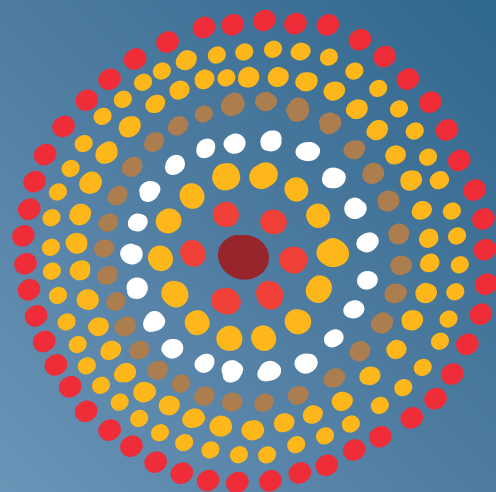
Gannawarra Shire Council adopted an Acknowledgement of Country at its meeting held on February 17, 2016.

A Partnership Agreement was signed on May 30, 2016 as part of Reconciliation Week celebration in Kerang. The Partnership Agreement acknowledged that partners had worked together successfully for many years and that the relationship between partners was strong. The Partnership Agreement also articulated the principles and recommended approach to continue to work together and to build on the philosophy of existing trust and respect through an investment of time and resources.

From 2014 onwards, National Reconciliation Week has been celebrated within the Shire. The aim is to involve the whole community in a united display demonstrating support for Reconciliation.

In 2015 Council and Regional Arts Victoria worked with the local Aboriginal community on a Shields and Spears installation in Apex Park Koondrook.

Artworks by local Elder and Artist, Aunty Esther Kirby OAM is also included in the new Koondrook Wharf precinct, opened in March 2017.



NAIDOC Week has been acknowledged each year since 2014 with a Ceremony including flag raising, smoking ceremony and morning tea. These celebrations provide an opportunity for local Elders and the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities to share their stories about Reconciliation and NAIDOC with the wider community.

Exhibitions of local Aboriginal art have been supported through the Gannawarra Library Services and sale of artwork is supported through the Gateway to Gannawarra Visitor Centre in Cohuna.

In 2016 Council partnered with Regional Arts Victoria to apply for a Victorian Department of Justice and Regulation Community Safety Grant. Working with local Elder, Uncle Lloyd Murray, a 'Respark the Park' event was held. The event helped develop community ideas to turn an outdated playground into a much needed place for children to play and meet others in the neighbourhood.

Over the following two years, plans were developed to turn the Respark the Park ideas into reality with the new look park opening in October 2018. The revamped park went on to be Highly Commended in the Prevention and Community Safety category at the 2019 National Awards for Local Government.

In 2016, Stage 1 of the Murray Explored project commenced; a Murray Explored Bioscan. The 2016 Bioscan was conducted in partnership with the local Aboriginal community. A number of events were held during this time including a school day, history day and an evening event at the Koondrook Hotel.

Visits to the Shire's pre-schools and the Gannawarra Children's Centre have been supported by Council over the years.

In 2017, the Kerang Elders partnered with Council, Mallee District Aboriginal Services, Northern District Community Health, Cohuna District Hospital, Kerang District Health and Victoria Police to facilitate a community Plaque Unveiling ceremony to acknowledge the Stolen Generation. The ceremony consisted of a Welcome to Country and smoking ceremony, followed by a presentation by Elders, the plaque unveiling and 'The Creation Dance' by Tyipen Kwe. The plaque is installed at the Gannawarra Children's Centre.



Photo: Gannawarra Reconciliation Week event

Also in 2017, Council commenced the development of a Beyond the Battle project. The Kerang Elders Group supported the inclusion of local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stories with the film previewing in the Kerang Memorial Hall on Remembrance Day, 11 November 2018, with 352 people in attendance. A large exhibition of photographs and stories was also on display as part of the event.

Council and partnership agencies hosted a production of HART by She Said Theatre in 2018. HART, a one man show, told a powerful story from the perspective of four Noongar men spanning three generations. The event was supported by a Welcome to Country and smoking ceremony by local Elders and art display by Tyipen Kwe.

Filming for the Welcome to Country video story was undertaken at Lake Meran in 2019 with this video story available for local events, to showcase on the websites of Council and partner agencies and social media platforms. The video story acknowledges the Traditional Owners and aims to create a respect and understanding of Aboriginal cultures in the wider community.

Our Journey towards Reconciliation has been one of Relationships, Respect and Opportunities.

We have been innovative and adaptive in our united approach and together we have acknowledged, celebrated and strengthened the voice of local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

Our commitment for the future will continue to build on our joint commitment to Relationships, Respect and Opportunities as we all celebrate the unique culture of the Gannawarra.



IT IS UP TO ALL OF US TO SUPPORT AND NURTURE OUR COMMUNITY FOR FUTURE GENERATIONS.



**RELATIONSHIPS
RESPECT
OPPORTUNITIES**

OUR RECONCILIATION ACTION PLAN

Gannawarra Shire Council's Reconciliation Action Plan builds on Council's vision for a proud, connected, and inclusive community.

Council strives to provide leadership to the broader community by building on our philosophy of existing trust and respectful relationships through an investment of time and resources.

Supported by the Kerang Elders and Leaders Group, Council is committed to progressing reconciliation by developing and implementing our Reconciliation Action Plan in partnership with local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

The agreed set of actions in our Gannawarra Reconciliation Action Plan underpins the commitment from Council to work with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to strengthen our existing relationships and work towards opportunities to improve health, employment and engagement outcomes.

The actions are organised under:

- Relationships - Partnerships, Communication, Engagement and Collaboration
- Respect - Cultural Learning, Participation and Celebration
- Opportunities - Employment, Education, Procurement and Projects
- Governance - Transparency and Accountability

To ensure accountability, Council commits to report progress back to Reconciliation Australia each year and to the community via Council's various communication channels, the Kerang Elders and Leaders Group, and external stakeholders.



Photo: Gannawarra Reconciliation Week Smoking Ceremony

OUR RECONCILIATION WORKING GROUP

Council's Reconciliation Working Group is responsible for the development, implementation and reporting of the Reconciliation Action Plan.

Made up of members of the Kerang Elders and Leaders Group, Councillors, Council staff and partner agencies, the working group consists of a diverse representation of people committed to the Reconciliation Action Plan vision:

- Chair of the Kerang Elders and Leaders Group (Local Elder)
- Mayor and Deputy Mayor
- Director Community Wellbeing
- Manager Community Health
- Coordinator Community Partnerships
- Coordinator Inclusive Communities
- Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander Elders, emerging leaders and community representatives (no less than 5)
- Chief Executive Officer, Northern District Community Health
- Mallee District Aboriginal Service representatives
- Chief Executive Officer, Kerang District Health
- Chief Executive Officer, Cohuna District Health
- Senior Sergeant, or representative, Victoria Police

An internal working group of Council officers responsible for the implementation of strategic actions contained within the Reconciliation Action Plan will meet quarterly and a half yearly progress report will be presented at the Gannawarra Shire Council Leadership Group meetings.

The internal working group of Council will consist of the following staff, Chief Executive Officer, Director Community Wellbeing (Reconciliation Action Plan Champion), Director Corporate Services, Executive Manager Economic Development, Manager Community Health, Manager Library Services, Manager People and Culture, Coordinator Inclusive Communities, and Coordinator Community Partnerships.

The Coordinator Inclusive Communities will provide secretariat support to Council's Reconciliation Working Group.

A presentation to a Council Briefing Session will take place annually and will be scheduled prior to the annual report to Reconciliation Australia.



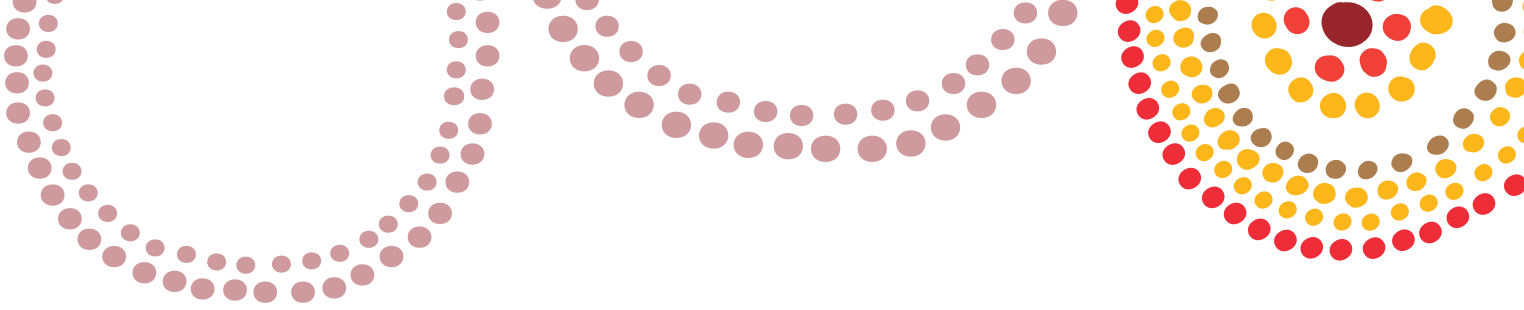


Photo: Uncle David Murray, Barapa Barapa Elder

RELATIONSHIPS

Council is committed to working in partnership with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to develop respectful and collaborative relationships as we continue our Reconciliation journey together. Council recognises that through respectful and collaborative relationships, we strengthen our ability to include and celebrate Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' voices, wisdom, culture and connection to Country into our shared goal of improving outcomes for all residents of the Gannawarra Shire.





ACTION	DELIVERABLE	TIMELINE	RESPONSIBILITY
1	* ESTABLISH, MAINTAIN, AND STRENGTHEN 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.	October 2024 Lead: Director Community Wellbeing Support: Reconciliation Action Plan Working Group Kerang Elders and Leaders Group
		* Develop and implement an engagement plan to work with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and organisations.	June 2025 Lead: Director Community Wellbeing Support: Reconciliation Action Plan Working Group Kerang Elders and Leaders Group
		Review the 2022 Partnership Agreement (see Appendix 1) between Kerang Aboriginal Elders and Council.	May 2025 Lead: Director Community Wellbeing Support: Reconciliation Action Plan Working Group Kerang Elders and Leaders Group Gannawarra Local Agency Meeting (GLAM) partners
		Facilitate an annual Walk on Country/Yarning Circle for community leaders to increase mutual understanding and build community leadership for reconciliation.	May 2025 Lead: Director Community Wellbeing Support: Reconciliation Action Plan Working Group Kerang Elders and Leaders Group
		2	* BUILD RELATIONSHIPS THROUGH CELEBRATING NATIONAL RECONCILIATION WEEK
* Reconciliation Action Plan Working Group members to participate in an external National Reconciliation Week event.	27 May - 3 June 2025, 2026 Lead: Director Community Wellbeing Support: Reconciliation Action Plan Working Group		
* Encourage and support staff and senior leaders to participate in at least one external event to recognise and celebrate National Reconciliation Week.	27 May - 3 June 2025, 2026 Lead: Chief Executive Officer Support: Reconciliation Action Plan Working Group		
* Organise at least one National Reconciliation Week event each year.	27 May - 3 June 2025, 2026 Lead: Director Community Wellbeing Support: Reconciliation Action Plan Working Group Kerang Elders and Leaders Group		
* Register all National Reconciliation Week events on Reconciliation Australia's National Reconciliation Week website.	May 2025, 2026 Lead: Coordinator Inclusive Communities		
Hold at least one Aboriginal Art exhibition annually, particularly to coincide with Reconciliation Week and NAIDOC Week.	May 2025, 2026 Lead: Manager Library Services Support: Coordinator Community Partnerships		

* Deliverables set by Reconciliation Australia



ACTION	DELIVERABLE	TIMELINE	RESPONSIBILITY
3	* PROMOTE RECONCILIATION THROUGH OUR SPHERE OF INFLUENCE	* Develop and implement a staff engagement strategy to raise awareness of reconciliation across Council's workforce and increase staff awareness and understanding around the Uluru Statement from the Heart.	June 2025 Lead: Manager People and Culture Support: Reconciliation Action Plan Working Group
		* Communicate Council's commitment to reconciliation publicly.	September 2024 Lead: Chief Executive Officer Support: Reconciliation Action Plan Working Group
		* Explore opportunities to positively influence our external stakeholders to drive reconciliation outcomes.	February 2025 Lead: Director Community Wellbeing Support: Reconciliation Action Plan Working Group Kerang Elders and Leaders Group
		* Collaborate with Reconciliation Action Plan organisations and other like-minded organisations to develop innovative approaches to advance reconciliation.	February 2025 Lead: Director Community Wellbeing Support: Reconciliation Action Plan Working Group Kerang Elders and Leaders Group
		Work with a range of new partners including employment agencies, schools, Traditional Owner Groups, North Central Catchment Management Authority, and other councils.	February 2025 Lead: Manager Community Health Support: Reconciliation Action Plan Working Group
4	* PROMOTE POSITIVE RACE RELATIONS THROUGH ANTI-DISCRIMINATION STRATEGIES	* Conduct a review of human resources policies and procedures to identify existing anti-discrimination provisions, and future needs.	November 2024 Lead: Manager People and Culture Support: Reconciliation Action Plan Working Group
		* Develop, implement, and communicate an anti-discrimination policy for Council.	December 2024 Lead: Chief Executive Officer Support: Reconciliation Action Plan Working Group
		* Engage with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander advisors to consult on Council's anti-discrimination policy.	December 2024 Lead: Director Community Wellbeing Support: Reconciliation Action Plan Working Group
		* Educate senior leaders on the effects of racism.	December 2024 Lead: Chief Executive Officer Support: Reconciliation Action Plan Working Group

* Deliverables set by Reconciliation Australia



Photo: Jayla Edwards

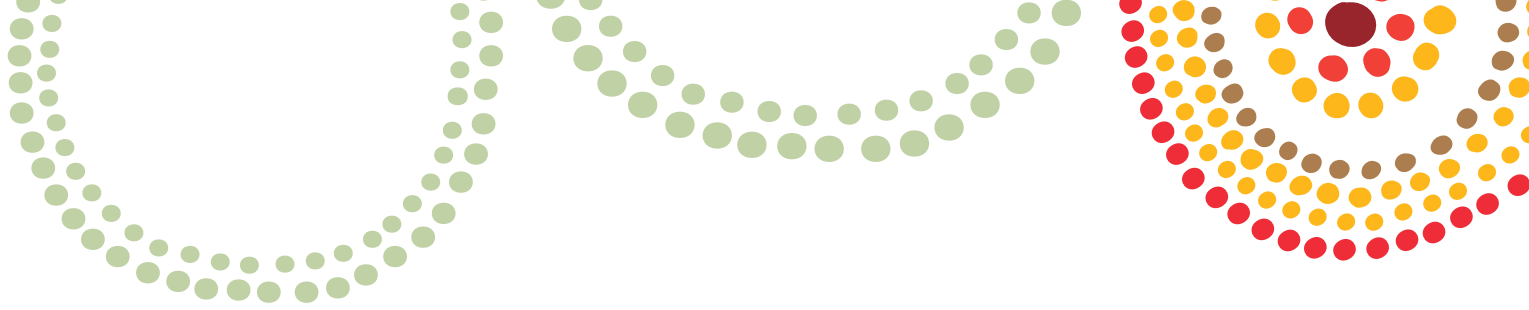
RESPECT

Council is committed to promoting respect for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, cultures and histories. Council supports an increase of cultural awareness across our organisation and municipality as we recognise that this builds understanding and supports a deeper sense of connection, cultural identity, pride and belonging. We acknowledge and respect the Traditional Custodians of Gannawarra, the Barapa Barapa, the Wamba Wamba and the Yorta Yorta peoples. Through this Reconciliation Action Plan we are committed to walking forward together towards a unified future, in which we understand, value and respect each other.



ACTION	DELIVERABLE	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 Council’s cultural learning needs.	June 2025	Lead: Manager People and Culture Support: Reconciliation Action Plan Working Group
	* Consult local Traditional Owners and/ or Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander advisors to inform Council’s cultural learning strategy.	September 2025	Lead: Director Community Wellbeing Support: Reconciliation Action Plan Working Group Kerang Elders and Leaders Group Traditional Owner Groups
	* Develop, implement, and communicate a cultural learning strategy document for Council staff and councillors.	September 2025	Lead: Manager People and Culture Support: Reconciliation Action Plan Working Group
	* Provide opportunities for Reconciliation Action Plan Working Group members, human resource staff and other key leadership staff to participate in formal and structured cultural learning and incorporate cultural awareness training in the induction process.	March 2025	Lead: Manager People and Culture Support: Reconciliation Action Plan Working Group

* Deliverables set by Reconciliation Australia



ACTION	DELIVERABLE	TIMELINE	RESPONSIBILITY
6 * DEMONSTRATE RESPECT TO ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER PEOPLES BY OBSERVING CULTURAL PROTOCOLS	* Increase Council staff understanding of the purpose and significance behind cultural protocols, including Acknowledgement of Country and Welcome to Country protocols.	May 2025	Lead: Director Community Wellbeing Support: Reconciliation Action Plan Working Group
	* Develop, implement, and communicate a cultural protocol document including Welcome to Country and Acknowledgement of Country with input from Local Elders.	May 2025	Lead: Council Support: Reconciliation Action Plan Working Group Kerang Elders and Leaders Group
	* Invite a local Traditional Owner or Custodian to provide a Welcome to Country or other appropriate cultural protocol at significant events each year.	October 2024	Lead: Chief Executive Officer Support: Reconciliation Action Plan Working Group
	* Include an Acknowledgement of Country or other appropriate protocols at the commencement of important meetings.	October 2024	Lead: Chief Executive Officer Support: Reconciliation Action Plan Working Group
	Implement an Acknowledgement of Country in email banners, website, strategic documents, official letterheads, and newsletters.	October 2024	Lead: Director Corporate Services Support: Coordinator Communications Reconciliation Action Plan Working Group
	Develop a policy for flying the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander flags at Council and partnership agency facilities.	September 2024	Lead: Council Support: Director Community Wellbeing Reconciliation Action Plan Working Group Kerang Elders and Leader Group
	7 * BUILD RESPECT FOR ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER CULTURES AND HISTORIES BY CELEBRATING NAIDOC WEEK	* Reconciliation Action Plan Working Group to participate in an external NAIDOC Week event.	First week in July 2025 and 2026
* Review human resource policies and procedures to remove barriers to staff participating in NAIDOC Week.		June 2025	Lead: Manager People and Culture Support: Reconciliation Action Plan Working Group
* Promote and encourage participation in external NAIDOC events to all staff.		June 2025, 2026	Lead: Chief Executive Officer Support: Reconciliation Action Plan Working Group

* Deliverables set by Reconciliation Australia



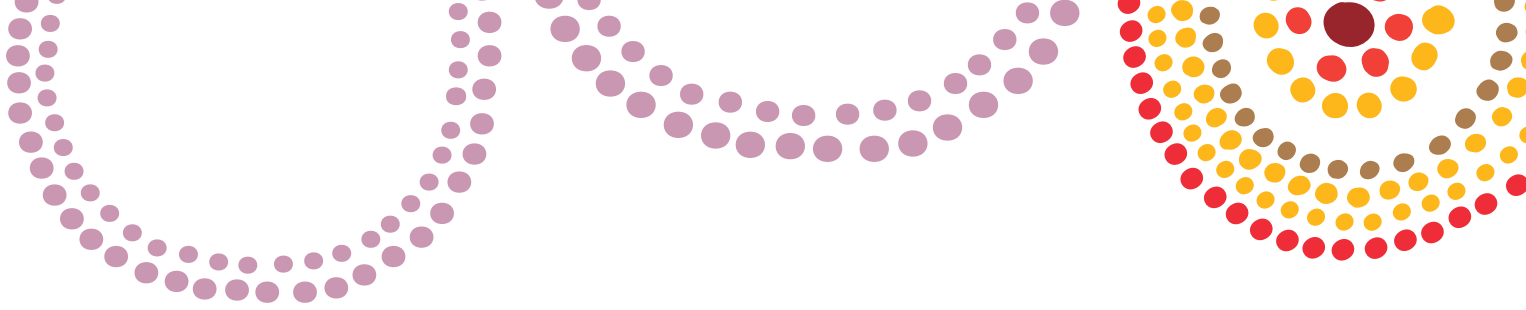
ACTION	DELIVERABLE	TIMELINE	RESPONSIBILITY
UNIQUE ACTIONS TO DEVELOP RESPECT			
<p>8 PROVIDE OPPORTUNITIES FOR THE PROMOTION OF ABORIGINAL ARTS AND CULTURE THROUGHOUT THE COMMUNITY</p>	<p>Provide exhibition space for Aboriginal artwork in suitable Council venues throughout the Shire.</p>	<p>October 2025, 2026</p>	<p>Lead: Director Community Wellbeing Support: Coordinator Community Partnerships</p>
	<p>Use local Aboriginal artwork and photographs in Council's strategic documents to increase the visibility of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.</p>	<p>February 2025</p>	<p>Lead: Director Community Wellbeing Support: Coordinator Communications</p>
	<p>Engage a minimum of one Aboriginal Touring Product in the annual theatre production calendar per year.</p>	<p>June 2025, 2026</p>	<p>Lead: Director Community Wellbeing Support: Coordinator Community Partnerships</p>
	<p>Explore opportunities for a bush tucker garden to be established in Kerang.</p>	<p>June 2025</p>	<p>Lead: Manager Community Health Support: Reconciliation Action Plan Working Group Kerang Elders and Leaders Group Northern District Community Health Mallee District Aboriginal Service</p>
<p>9 INCREASE VISIBILITY OF ABORIGINAL & TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER PEOPLES THROUGHOUT COUNCIL'S WORK</p>	<p>Engage a First Nations artist to create a community designed shirt and a protocol for wearing a shirt at partnership events.</p>	<p>March 2025</p>	<p>Lead: Director Community Wellbeing Support: Reconciliation Action Plan Working Group Kerang Elders and Leaders Group Northern District Community Health</p>
	<p>Develop an agreed framework for using and celebrating local language and stories.</p>	<p>June 2025</p>	<p>Lead: Director Community Wellbeing Support: Kerang Elders and Leaders Group Reconciliation Action Plan Working Group Northern District Community Health Mallee District Aboriginal Service</p>
<p>10 INCREASE UNDERSTANDING, VALUE AND RECOGNITION OF ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER CULTURES & HISTORIES THROUGHOUT THE WIDER COMMUNITY.</p>	<p>Continue to build and provide educational resources through the Gannawarra Library Service and Gannawarra Children's Services</p>	<p>October 2024</p>	<p>Lead: Manager Libraries Support: Manager Children Services</p>



Photo: Hack Webster, Barapa Barapa, Gannawarra Reconciliation Week event pictured with former Mayor Charlie Gillingham

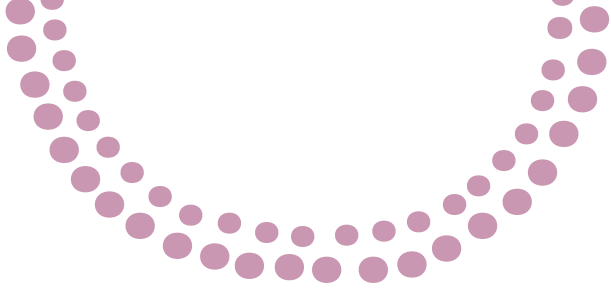
OPPORTUNITIES

Council is committed to improving inclusion, access, and equity for all residents. Through this Reconciliation Action Plan Council aims to walk with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, to listen to their voices and to support input into decisions that impact on their lives. We aim to support all Gannawarra Shire residents to be proud of, and openly celebrate, their cultural identity and to have equal access to opportunities that improve social, economic and health outcomes. Council's values of Trust, Respect, Innovation and Collaboration and goals of enhancing Liveability, Growth and Sustainability, will guide our future work as we seek out opportunities to improve the lives of all residents who call Gannawarra home.

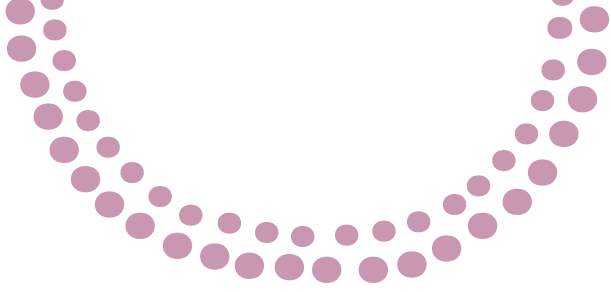


ACTION	DELIVERABLE	TIMELINE	RESPONSIBILITY
11	* IMPROVE EMPLOYMENT OUTCOMES BY INCREASING ABORIGINAL AND/OR TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER RECRUITMENT, RETENTION, AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT	* Build understanding of current Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staffing to inform future employment and professional development opportunities.	June 2025 Lead: Manager People and Culture Support: Reconciliation Action Plan Working Group
		* Engage with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff to consult on our recruitment, retention, and development strategy.	March 2026 Lead: Manager People and Culture Support: Reconciliation Action Plan Working Group
		* Develop and implement an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander recruitment, retention, and development strategy.	March 2026 Lead: Manager People and Culture Support: Reconciliation Action Plan Working Group
		* Advertise job vacancies to effectively reach Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders.	March 2026 Lead: Manager People and Culture Support: Reconciliation Action Plan Working Group
		* Review human resource and recruitment procedures and policies to remove barriers to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander participation in our workplace.	March 2026 Lead: Manager People and Culture Support: Reconciliation Action Plan Working Group
12	* 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 2025 Lead: Executive Manager Economic Development Support: Reconciliation Action Plan Working Group
		* Investigate Supply Nation membership.	June 2025 Lead: Executive Manager Economic Development Support: Reconciliation Action Plan Working Group
		Investigate accessing support through Kinaway Chamber of Commerce Victoria, the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander business support and advice service.	June 2025 Lead: Executive Manager Economic Development Support: Reconciliation Action Plan Working Group
		* Develop and communicate opportunities for procurement of goods and services from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander businesses to staff.	June 2025 Lead: Director Corporate Services Support: Reconciliation Action Plan Working Group
		* Review and update procurement practices to remove barriers to procuring goods and services from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander businesses.	June 2025 Lead: Director Corporate Services Support: Reconciliation Action Plan Working Group
		* Develop commercial relationships with Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander businesses.	June 2025 Lead: Executive Manager Economic Development Support: Reconciliation Action Plan Working Group

* Deliverables set by Reconciliation Australia



ACTION	DELIVERABLE	TIMELINE	RESPONSIBILITY
UNIQUE ACTIONS TO DEVELOP OPPORTUNITIES			
<p>13</p> <p>PARTICIPATE IN PARTNERSHIP OPPORTUNITIES THAT ENCOURAGE ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER EDUCATION PATHWAYS, AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE</p>	<p>Advocate for ongoing funding for Children and Youth Programs including local programs Tyipen Kwe (Children), Tyipen Kwe (Youth) and Kethawil Pembengguk to ensure that children and young people are culturally strong and have the opportunity to learn about Country, language, stories, women’s and men’s business and develop a sense of belonging, cultural identity, and connection.</p>	<p>October 2024</p>	<p>Lead: Director Community Wellbeing Support: Reconciliation Action Plan Working Group Kerang Elders and Leaders Group Northern District Community Health Mallee District Aboriginal Service</p>
	<p>Provide funding to support Healing on Country activities for local First Nations young people through a series of on Country excursions and camps such as to Lake Meran, Sandhill Lake, Gunbower Island in partnership with NDCH.</p>	<p>May 2025</p>	<p>Lead: Director Community Wellbeing Support: Reconciliation Action Plan Working Group Kerang Elders and Leaders Group Northern District Community Health Mallee District Aboriginal Service</p>
	<p>Engage an Aboriginal Elder to attend local kindergartens annually to encourage and support reconciliation, inclusion, pride in culture and connection to Country.</p>	<p>March 2025</p>	<p>Lead: Manager Children Services Support: Northern District Community Health</p>
	<p>Continue to support and expand the Gannawarra Bush Kindergarten programs.</p>	<p>December 2024</p>	<p>Lead: Manager Childrens Services</p>
<p>14</p> <p>INVESTIGATE ABORIGINAL TOURISM OPPORTUNITIES THAT SUPPORTS SUSTAINABLE ECONOMIC GROWTH FOR THE REGION</p>	<p>Commit to exploring a project that supports Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander participation in the tourism sector.</p>	<p>March 2026</p>	<p>Lead: Executive Manager Economic Development Support: Reconciliation Action Plan Working Group</p>
	<p>Celebrate our aboriginal heritage and RAMSAR sites, including the development and installation of interpretive signage along key tourism trails.</p>	<p>March 2026</p>	<p>Lead: Executive Manager Economic Development Support: Reconciliation Action Plan Working Group</p>



ACTION	DELIVERABLE	TIMELINE	RESPONSIBILITY
15	SUPPORT GANNAWARRA'S ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER COMMUNITIES TO DEVELOP A DEEPER SENSE OF CONNECTION, CULTURAL IDENTITY, AND BELONGING	Explore funding opportunities to create a dedicated gathering space in Kerang for Aboriginal Elders, leaders, and community members to gather and yarn, celebrate culture, and strengthened connections.	October 2024 Lead: Director Community Wellbeing Support: Reconciliation Action Plan Working Group Kerang Elders and Leaders Group Northern District Community Health Mallee District Aboriginal Service
		Engage with local Elders and community members to identify community needs and how these can effectively be supported by Council.	October 2024 Lead: Director Community Wellbeing Support: Kerang Elders and Leaders Group
		Work with local Elders and partner agencies to explore the National Agreement on Closing the Gap and outcomes which can be influenced locally to close the gap for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander residents.	March 2025 Lead: Manager Community Health Support: Kerang Elders and Leaders Group Northern District Community Health Mallee District Aboriginal Service



GOVERNANCE

We will track our progress and report regularly to acknowledge our achievements, challenges, and learnings.

ACTION	DELIVERABLE	TIMELINE	RESPONSIBILITY
16 * ESTABLISH AND MAINTAIN AN EFFECTIVE RECONCILIATION WORKING GROUP TO DRIVE GOVERNANCE OF THE RECONCILIATION ACTION PLAN	* Maintain Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander representation on the Reconciliation Working Group.	September 2024	Lead: Director Community Wellbeing Support: Kerang Elders and Leaders Group
	* Establish and apply a Terms of Reference for the Reconciliation Working Group.	September 2024	Lead: Director Community Wellbeing Support: Reconciliation Action Plan Working Group Kerang Elders and Leaders Group
	* Meet at least four times per year to drive and monitor Reconciliation Action Plan implementation.	April, July, October, January annually	Lead: Director Community Wellbeing Support: Reconciliation Action Plan Working Group Kerang Elders and Leaders Group
17 * PROVIDE APPROPRIATE SUPPORT FOR EFFECTIVE IMPLEMENTATION OF RECONCILIATION ACTION PLAN COMMITMENTS	* Define resource needs for Reconciliation Action Plan implementation.	September 2024	Lead: Director Community Wellbeing Support: Reconciliation Action Plan Working Group
	* Engage our senior leaders and other staff in the delivery of Reconciliation Action Plan commitments.	September 2024	Lead: Chief Executive Officer Support: Reconciliation Action Plan Working Group
	* Define and maintain appropriate systems to track, measure and report on Reconciliation Action Plan commitments.	October 2024	Lead: Director Community Wellbeing Support: Reconciliation Action Plan Working Group
	* Appoint and maintain an internal Reconciliation Action Plan Champion from senior management.	October 2024	Lead: Chief Executive Officer

* Deliverables set by Reconciliation Australia



ACTION	DELIVERABLE	TIMELINE	RESPONSIBILITY	
18	* BUILD ACCOUNTABILITY AND TRANSPARENCY THROUGH REPORTING RECONCILIATION ACTION PLAN ACHIEVEMENTS, CHALLENGES, AND LEARNINGS BOTH INTERNALLY AND EXTERNALLY	* Contact Reconciliation Australia to verify that Council’s primary and secondary contact details are up to date, to ensure that Council does not miss out on important Reconciliation Action Plan correspondence.	June annually	Lead: Coordinator Inclusive Communities
		* Contact Reconciliation Australia to request our unique link, to access the online Reconciliation Action Plan Impact Survey.	August annually	Lead: Coordinator Inclusive Communities
		* Complete and submit the annual Reconciliation Action Plan Impact Survey to Reconciliation Australia.	30 September annually	Lead: Coordinator Inclusive Communities
		* Report Reconciliation Action Plan progress to all staff and senior leaders quarterly.	March, June, September, December annually	Lead: Director Community Wellbeing Support: Reconciliation Action Plan Working Group
		* Publicly report our Reconciliation Action Plan achievements, challenges, and learnings annually via the Council’s Annual Report.	30 June annually	Lead: Director Community Wellbeing Support: Reconciliation Action Plan Working Group
		* Investigate participating in Reconciliation Australia’s biennial Workplace Reconciliation Action Plan Barometer.	March 2026	Lead: Director Community Wellbeing Support: Reconciliation Action Plan Working Group
		* Submit a traffic light report to Reconciliation Australia at the conclusion of this Reconciliation Action Plan.	August 2026	Lead: Director Community Wellbeing Support: Reconciliation Action Plan Working Group
19	* CONTINUE OUR RECONCILIATION JOURNEY BY DEVELOPING COUNCIL’S NEXT RECONCILIATION ACTION PLAN.	* Register via Reconciliation Australia’s website to begin developing Council’s next Reconciliation Action Plan.	March 2026	Lead: Coordinator Inclusive Communities

* Deliverables set by Reconciliation Australia



Photo: Tyipen Kwe Children's Program

CONTACT DETAILS:

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RECONCILIATION
ACTION PLAN

INNOVATE



GANNAWARRA
Shire Council

