



Wyndham City Council

Reconciliation Action Plan

July 2023 - July 2025





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WARNING: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People are warned that the following document could contain images and words of people who have died and returned to their Dreaming.

Acknowledgement of Country

Wyndham City Council recognises Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as the first Peoples of Australia. We acknowledge Bunurong and Wadawurrung¹ Peoples as Traditional Owners of the lands on which Wyndham City operates. The Wadawurrung and Bunurong Peoples have and always will belong to the Werribee Yalook (River), creeks, stars, hills and red clay of this Country.

The Bunurong and Wadawurrung Peoples are the First Custodians of the lands, waters, seas and skies, and developers of ecological communities on these basalt plains around the Werribee Yalook.

We pay respect to their Ancestors and Elders who always have, and always will, care for Country and community today and for future generations. We acknowledge any Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people who live in this tradition and call us to shared responsibility. In the spirit of reconciliation, we understand the need to build strong connection between local First Peoples and local government that enables life in this place to flourish together.

May our words and actions lead us to respect Country, learn from Elders and practice creative wisdom for future generations.

Community Vision

With the Victorian Constitution, Wyndham City Council agrees that the founding of Wyndham occurred without proper consultation, recognition or involvement of First Nations People of this place. Wyndham City Council commits to ensuring respectful consultation, recognition and involvement of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities in determining the vision of this place for future generations. (Wyndham 2040 Community Vision, p.3)

¹ To assist with correct pronunciation, the *Victorian Aboriginal Corporation for Languages* suggests these spellings for the three different language groups. Council acknowledges the right of Aboriginal people to choose various English spellings to communicate names that were passed down orally. The choice of spelling here refers to the language groups and is not intended to show preference for any one Traditional Owner organisation over another

History of the Werribee River

Bunurong Story

For tens of thousands of years, the Werribee River has been a significant meeting place for Aboriginal people to build community, exchange resources, and share responsibility for its lands. The River forms the natural boundary between the lands of the Woiwurrung, Wathaurong and Bunurong peoples. Some of the names the Werribee River has had include: 'Arndell', 'Peel' and the 'Ex'. Explorer's Hume and Hovell named it Arndell in 1824 after Hovell's father-in-law. John Helder Wedge returned to the River in 1835, called it Peel and then Ex. A local Wautharong man informed Wedge that the name of the stream was 'Weariby Yallock, the Aboriginal words meaning spine (Weariby) and stream (Yallock).

The basalt plains around the Werribee River have been home to Aboriginal people, families and communities for countless generations. Their range of knowledge and complex skills, shared through generations of storytelling, are evident in the grasslands, trees, stones and waterways. Although limited in view, written records by the Europeans who came later acknowledge the presence of distinct Aboriginal societies that managed the land sustainably. The Kulin Nation exercised local lore and formed regional alliances to build healthy and robust economies around the Werribee River as the "backbone"² of life. They describe two main Ancestral Beings that influence relationships and responsibilities: Bunjil the creator, the Wedge-tailed Eagle; and Waa the protector, the Crow.³ Education through cultural practices such as art, storytelling and dance continue to strengthen local First Nations communities and maintain their connections to the land today.

Wadawurrung Story

For tens of thousands of years, the Werribee River has been a significant meeting place to build community, exchange resources, and share responsibility for it. The river forms a natural boundary between the lands of the Wadawurrung and Bunurong Peoples. Waterways, such as the Werribee River (or Weribbi Yuluk), are the essence of life – providing for community health, to the liveability of local neighbourhoods and to the broader environment. Rivers, streams and creeks have special significance for Wadawurrung Traditional Owners, encompassing cultural, spiritual, social, economic and environmental values.

For more information on each Aboriginal group, please visit the Registered Aboriginal Party [Bunurong Land Council Aboriginal Corporation](#) and [Wadawurrung Traditional Owners Aboriginal Corporation](#)

² European settlers of Wyndham recorded "weariby", meaning "backbone", to be the Aboriginal name for the river. See [Wyndham History](#)

³ For more information from Aboriginal Victorian perspectives, see [Bunjilaka Aboriginal Cultural Centre](#), Museums Victoria website.



Commitment from Wyndham Councillors: Cr Robert Szatkowski, Cr Peter Maynard, Cr Susan McIntyre, Cr Jennie Barrera, Cr Jasmine Hill, Cr Adele Hegedich, Cr Sahana Ramesh, Cr Mia Shaw, Cr Josh Gilligan, Cr Marcel Mahfoud, (Absent Cr Heather Marcus).

Councillor Message

It is with great honour that we present the Wyndham City Council's second Innovate Reconciliation Action Plan (2023-25). The plan was developed in consultation with the Wyndham Reconciliation Advisory Committee co-chaired by Councillor Jennie Barrera and First Nations community member Kym Willis, Bunurong Land Council Aboriginal Corporation, Wadawurrung Traditional Owners Aboriginal Corporation, and the Wyndham community. The plan seeks to strengthen and continue Council's role in facilitating a whole of community approach to reconciliation.

Our journey towards reconciliation requires a willingness to listen, acknowledge, lead positive change and strong leadership. As a Council we

will commit to continue celebrating the histories, cultures and positive achievements of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, while implementing meaningful actions outlined in this Reconciliation Action Plan.

This Reconciliation Action Plan builds on our experiences from the first Reconciliation Action Plan initiatives. We have made steady progress in some areas, however, we also know that there are areas where progress has been slower, and this is an area that we will address and commit to progressing.

Council supports Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' right to self-determination and we are committed to increasing our cultural safety and awareness, determined to create opportunities and to improve our services for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.



Mr Stephen Wall
Chief Executive Officer,
Wyndham City Council

Message from the CEO

Welcome to Wyndham City Council's second Innovate RAP. This RAP recognises our commitment, as an organisation, to strengthen and develop relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, through the development and piloting of innovative strategies that empower First Nations Peoples.

Wyndham has one of the largest Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities in the Western Region, with a rich and diverse history. This plan is an important milestone in ensuring the truth associated with that history are communicated, shared and embedded in the community. Meaningful reflection and commitment like this will lead to a more inclusive future for all.

We want our community to respectfully acknowledge the connection of Traditional Owners and other Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community members to the land and waterways,

to better understand culture and history and to recognise the experiences of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people living in Wyndham so they feel valued.

Our reconciliation journey so far has achieved many great things, including the opening of the Wunggurrwil Dhurrung Centre in 2019. This RAP recognises there are still opportunities to learn, strengthen what we have accomplished and ensure the voices of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities are reflected in all we do.

Congratulations to the staff and community members who have helped shape this plan. I am committed to working across our organisation and in partnership with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities to conserve our living cultural heritage and ensure Wyndham is an inclusive, welcoming place that celebrates First Nations and multicultural past and future.





WRAC Group names from left to right: Robert Monohan, Samantha Bennett (with Isla Comyn), Uncle Brian Campbell, Elizabeth McPherson, Kym Willis, Cr Jennie Barrera, Aunty Judy Dalton-Walsh, Dylan Wishart, Narelle Keleher, Kelly Lehmann. Absent – Kristy Gray & Trish Crossin

Message from the Wyndham Reconciliation Advisory Committee

The journey towards a Reconciliation Action Plan commenced with the launch of Wyndham City Council's Statement of Commitment (2015). This set the framework for Council's first Innovate RAP (2017-2019) to be created. In 2021, Wyndham's second Reconciliation Advisory Committee was established, and as a committee we have worked closely with Council to develop this second Innovate RAP.

Our committee is co-chaired by Councillor Jennie Barrera and Aboriginal community member Kym Willis. It is made up of eight Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander volunteer community members and three non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander volunteer community members who guide and assist the planning of the RAP and its implementation. This plan will be inclusive of all

First Nations people and all other communities that live, work and play in Wyndham.

As a committee, we have had the hard conversations about the impact of colonisation, oppression and assimilation. We have discussed the present circumstances and impacts on Aboriginal communities and the positive impact the previous RAP has had, not only for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, but also for the wider Wyndham community.

In collaboration with Wyndham City staff, we have a united vision to ensure reconciliation continues to evolve and progress now and for future generations.

We are proud to be sitting on such a committee, where our views and voices will empower Wyndham to become a culturally safe place for our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. We are walking and sharing this journey together through the implementation of a dynamic Reconciliation Action Plan within Wyndham City Council.



Karen Mundine

Chief Executive Officer, Reconciliation Australia

Message from Reconciliation Australia

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

With over 2.3 million people now either working or studying in an organisation with a RAP, the program's potential for impact is greater than ever. Wyndham City Council continues to be part of a strong network of more than 1,100 corporate, government, and not-for-profit organisations that have taken goodwill and transformed it into action.

The four RAP types - Reflect, Innovate, Stretch and Elevate - allow RAP partners to continuously strengthen reconciliation commitments and constantly strive to apply learnings in new ways.

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

An integral part of building these foundations is reflecting on and cataloguing the successes and challenges of previous RAPs. Learnings gained through effort and innovation are invaluable resources that Wyndham City Council

will continuously draw upon to create RAP commitments rooted in experience and maturity.

These learnings extend to Wyndham City Council using the lens of reconciliation to better understand its core business, sphere of influence, and diverse community of staff and stakeholders.

The RAP program's emphasis on relationships, respect, and opportunities gives organisations a framework from which to foster connections with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples rooted in mutual collaboration and trust.

This Innovate RAP is an opportunity for Wyndham City Council to strengthen these relationships, gain crucial experience, and nurture connections that will become the lifeblood of its future RAP commitments. By enabling and empowering staff to contribute to this process, Wyndham City Council will ensure shared and cooperative success in the long-term.

Gaining experience and reflecting on pertinent learnings will ensure the sustainability of Wyndham City Council's future RAPs and reconciliation initiatives, providing meaningful impact toward Australia's reconciliation journey.

Congratulations Wyndham City Council on your second Innovate RAP and I look forward to following your ongoing reconciliation journey.



Scott McCartney
Chief Executive Officer, Kinaway

Message from Kinaway

Kinaway is from the Gonnai language meaning 'exchange'. Kinaway Chamber of Commerce is the leading Victorian organisation dedicated to supporting Victorian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander business owners. Kinaway Chamber of Commerce works closely with businesses by providing support, networking, advocacy and partnerships.

It is fantastic to see Wyndham City Council's ongoing commitment to genuinely engaging in their reconciliation journey. I look forward to seeing the outcomes of the significant improvements made through the deliverance of their new RAP goals and observing how Wyndham City Council continue to acknowledge and respect our Indigenous communities and businesses.

Featured Artwork



Aunty Marlene Gilson
Waa Waa – Crow Feathers, 2021
Acrylic on linen
61 x 76.3

Aunty Marlene Gilson is a Wathaurung (Wadawurrung) Elder living on country in Gordon, near Ballarat.

Marlene Gilson's multi-figure paintings work to overturn the colonial grasp on the past by reclaiming and re-contextualising the representation of historical events. Learning her Wathaurung history from her grandmother, Gilson began painting while recovering from an illness.

The artist's meticulously rendered works display a narrative richness and theatrical quality akin to the traditional genre of history painting. Gilson, however, privileges those stories relating to her ancestral land, which covers Ballarat, Werribee, Geelong, Skipton and the Otway Ranges in Victoria.

Often including her two totems, Bunjil the Eagle and Waa the Crow, Gilson's paintings not only reconfigure historical narratives, but display her spiritual connection to Country.

Artist Statement

Waa Waa – Crow Feathers is a painting from Aunty Marlene Gilson's 2022 exhibition 'Bunjil Wour Kun Ya – Spirit of My Ancestors'.

This work tells the story of Waa-Waa, the first Wadawurrung to see a white man, Matthew Flinders and his crew surveying the southern Australian coastline near the You Yangs on 1 May 1802.

Speaking to Wyndham Art Gallery's curatorial framework themes of Foregrounding, Habitat and Localism, the work portrays in Wadawurrung lore the first sighting of a European and acknowledges Australian First Nations peoples original and ongoing connections with land, history, politics and knowledges of place. The scene is overlooking the You Yangs which is deeply connected with the local place and habitat of the Werribee Plain.



Maree Clarke
River Reed Necklace, 2022
black dyed natural river
reeds, cockatoo and crow
feathers, twine
50 meters

Maree Clarke, a Mutti Mutti, Yorta Yorta, BoonWurrung woman from Mildura in northwest Victoria, is a multi-disciplinary artist living and working in Melbourne.

Maree's practice is dedicated to renewing South-Eastern Australian Aboriginal cultural practices, galvanizing culture and passing on of Aboriginal knowledge. Maree's art making includes a wide variety of mediums such as photography, sculpture, printmaking, and jewellery. *River Reed Necklace* is included in a body of work dedicated to recreating traditional necklaces at a larger-than-life scale. The supersizing of the work echoes the enormous amount of loss in Aboriginal culture due to colonisation. It also stands large and proud celebrating the oldest continuing culture in the world and is connected to Wyndham Art Gallery's curatorial theme of Foregrounding.

Artist statement

This specific necklace, at 50 meters long and was thread at Footscray Community Arts Centre to accommodate its length. The cockatoo and crow feathers used in the necklace ring true to Wyndham's diverse Habitat (another curatorial theme) and the abundance bird life that make up the eco-system of the West which includes the Western Treatment Plant, Point Cook Coastal Park, Heathdale Glen Orden Wetlands and the Werribee River.



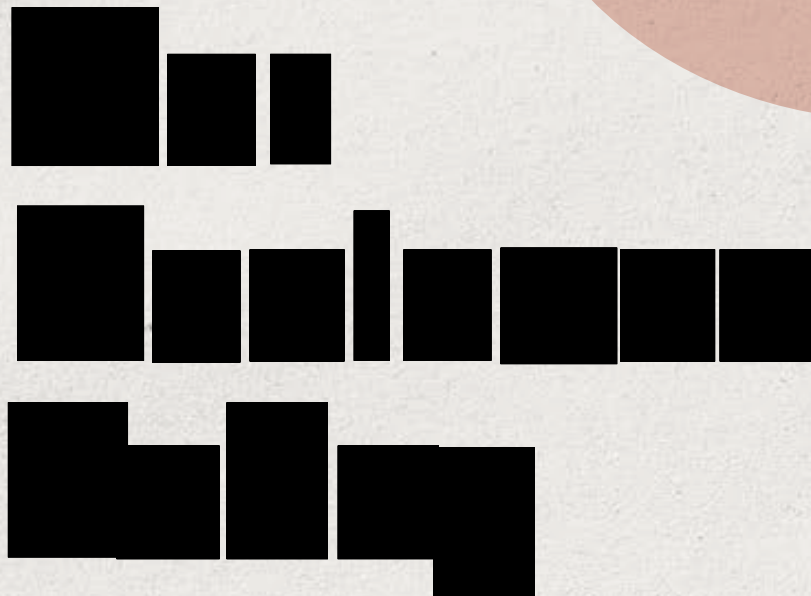
Kobi Summers
My Country, Time Heals, 2021
Digital work

Kobi Summers is a young emerging Aboriginal Artist, who is a Proud Bunurong Man living in Melbourne. He specialises in Digital Art, Contemporary aboriginal Canvas Art, Mural Art and Clothing Art.

Artist Statement

This artwork is a story of life over coming darkness. Rebirth and renewal.

As a Bunurong person this story means a lot to my people, this represents community past, present and future and the struggles we have had to overcome to become the people we are today in the world we are today.



The Shire of Wyndham was established in 1864 and became Wyndham City in 1994. The Councillors elect the Mayor and “set the strategic directions, decide on council policies and resources, and monitor council performance.”⁴

This municipality in western metropolitan Melbourne is rapidly growing and culturally diverse.⁵ Over 300,000 people live in rural districts, established town centres and newly built suburbs. This Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) aims to increase opportunities for local Aboriginal⁶ and Torres Strait Islander people to thrive in all aspects of the community.

Population growth and substantial housing development present social and environmental challenges that also threaten living Aboriginal cultural heritage.

In our second RAP, Wyndham City Council seeks to ensure that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities continue to fully participate in the achievement of this vision alongside all residents of the City.

Wyndham hosts industrial and retail precincts that present opportunities for Wyndham City Council to support participation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in strong local economies through employment and enterprise. With approximately 1800 employees, Wyndham City Council is one of the largest employers in the municipality and knows from informal networks that there are employees in the organisation that are Aboriginal and /or Torres Strait Islander and have chosen to not report this. It is Wyndham City Council's intention in this RAP to create a culturally safe and inclusive workplace to strengthen the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander workforce across all levels throughout the organisation over the next two years.

⁴ Municipal Association of Victoria – The role of Council

⁵ For detailed demographic profiles, see the [Council website](#) and [Profile.id](#)

⁶ Throughout this document, the term 'Aboriginal' is used to refer collectively to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as the first peoples of Australia, without denying their distinctiveness or sovereignty. 'Indigenous' is used in a similar way. While 'Koori' can refer to Aboriginal people from the south-eastern part of Australia, many Aboriginal people living in Wyndham City originate from outside this region.

Our Role

The [Victorian Aboriginal and Local Government Strategy](#) (2021 - 2026) is a guide for councils across Victoria to assist with embedding the voices and priorities of Aboriginal Communities at a local government level.

The Strategy recommends actions for Local Governments, the Victorian Government and Aboriginal communities that progress Aboriginal self-determination and reconciliation. It has been developed to support alignment of the Local Government sector with the Victorian Aboriginal Affairs Framework 2018-2023, the Victorian Treaty process, the Victorian Closing the Gap Implementation Plan and the work of the Yoo-rrook Justice Commission.

The Strategy includes a clear framework for shared decision-making processes and actions for Aboriginal Victorians working together with local government based on mutual control, shared power and decision-making, fairness, respect and trust.

Accordingly, this RAP is underpinned by the following principles to guide Council business:

- **CULTURE, RESPECT and TRUST** - Genuine partnerships between Aboriginal Victorians, local councils and the Victorian Government that celebrate, understand and embed Aboriginal cultural heritage and foster trust, and respect.
- **AWARENESS and ENGAGEMENT** - Open, proactive and ongoing dialogue between Aboriginal Victorians and local councils that is understanding, purposeful, meaningful, thoughtful and mutually beneficial.
- **ACCOUNTABILITY and DIRECTION** - Clarity and genuine ownership and accountability that recognises the critical role Aboriginal Victorians, local councils and the Victorian Government each play in progressing self-determination.
- **GOVERNANCE and PARTICIPATION** - Aboriginal cultural values, voices, knowledge and rights are embedded into the work local councils perform in creating vibrant local communities.

Council commits to tackling discrimination and racism together through shared understanding, truth, respect and care. Council will also seek opportunities to embed Aboriginal cultural values, voices, knowledge and rights into all its work.

The Council also has an important role in the identification and preservation of Aboriginal cultural heritage through our planning mechanisms and in the ongoing management of our significant living cultural heritage sites.

Our Vision for Reconciliation

Wyndham City Council celebrates and acknowledges Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander living culture and history. Our vision for Reconciliation is a Wyndham where we encompass our diverse community. When achieved, we will have increased opportunities for local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to thrive. We will challenge prejudice, discrimination and racism to ensure equitable access, participation and inclusion for all.

This vision builds on the [Wyndham 2040](#) Community Vision which is

“A safe, connected and inclusive community. We respect, acknowledge, value and celebrate the First Nations people, our heritage, cultural diversity and multicultural strengths.

Our community has the infrastructure and services it needs to support holistic health and wellbeing for all. Local employment and education facilities are plentiful, and there are a variety of recreational, leisure, tourism, art and cultural opportunities for everyone to experience throughout the municipality. We preserve our natural environment and rural lifestyle; we are able to get around easily and get to where we want to go efficiently. We are self-sufficient and pride ourselves on being green and sustainable.”



Acknowledging Our Past

We Acknowledge that First Nations People were the first Peoples of the lands, waterways and coast on which Wyndham operates. The displacement of Traditional Owners led to First Nations People being dispossessed of their lands and culture. Despite this, their spiritual connection to these 542 square kilometres of grasslands and rich basalt soils surrounding the Werribee Yalook remains strong.

Some of the earliest conflicts between First Nations Peoples and European colonial invaders occurred in Wyndham. Aboriginal people, lived here for thousands of years, resisted invasion and dispossession of their lands.⁷ The region's squatters and founding shire councillors led industrial and economic growth that displaced and dispossessed First Nations livelihoods, land and undermined their system of lore.

Wyndham City is central to a huge *"tract of country ... (that) was obtained for a trifle..."*⁸ by the Port Phillip Association in 1835. The massacre at Mt Cottrell⁹ in 1836 marked the breakdown of relations between First Nation Peoples and European colonial invaders that led to the elimination of the former from the foundation of Victoria.¹⁰ Places, such as the Werribee Park Mansion and Point Cook Coastal Park and Homestead, are significant sites of ancient Aboriginal occupation that became the wealthy estates of European colonial invaders who displaced and dispossessed the Traditional Custodians.¹¹

John Henry Wedge, a Port Phillip Association surveyor, noted the richness and abundance of First Nations communities' life around Werribee Yalook, their care of natural resources, and fierce resistance to foreign invasion. Aboriginal placenames were recognised in early town planning¹² but their protests against the "disappearance"¹³ of their communities from the land were excluded from written records. An important purpose of Council's second RAP is to ensure respectful recognition, acknowledgement, and truth-telling of First Nations histories across Wyndham.

A Snapshot of the Wyndham First Nations Community

Wyndham City is home to a large and diverse First Nations population. In recent years, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people from all over Australia have moved to Wyndham. This marks a steady increase from just over 700 residents identifying as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander in the 2006 census to almost 1200 in 2011, 1735 in 2016 and 2511 in 2021 representing 0.9 per cent of the Wyndham City total population.

Statistical data is limited and fraught with difficulty for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people who have experienced harm through participation in government identification processes in the past. However, respectful engagement can help provide evidence to inform service planning, targeted employment strategies, and community development priorities. Many First Nations people in Wyndham City are among the 47 per cent of First Nations communities who have a relative that was forcibly removed from their families under Stolen Generation policies, according to state government research (2015).¹⁴ Council can play a role in recognising and addressing the profound and complex costs of this intergenerational trauma in the First Nations communities.

The following observations from Wyndham City 2011-2021 census data¹⁵ suggest priorities to explore and clarify with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities:

- Around 53% of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population are under 24 years old. Therefore, Council seeks to give priority to planning and developing comprehensive services for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people. The Victorian Aboriginal Child Care Agency (Western) is an important partner with Council in providing access to culturally safe services.

- In 2011, whilst only 5% of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people held tertiary qualifications, significantly higher numbers were completing secondary schooling and vocational qualifications than in 2006. This suggests targets for employment and training strategies.
- Wunggurwil Dhurrung Centre is an important place for Wyndham's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Community to gather and access services.
- Local Koorie Engagement Support Officers (Department of Education and Training) and the Victorian Aboriginal Education Association Inc. are important partners that Council works with to improve and increase pathways to education and employment.
- In 2016, around a quarter of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander household incomes were classified as low (less than \$972 per week), and over 60% of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander households earned higher incomes of \$1,000 or more per week. This suggests a widening range of income levels between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander households and differing issues surrounding access to services. Council seeks to work with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community to understand the specific nature of disadvantage and its sources of strength and resilience, to identify priority areas to address over the next two years.
- In this municipality, the state justice system runs correctional facilities in which Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are over-represented and long-term outcomes are poor.

As more recent census figures become available, it will be possible to learn more about the dynamic and diverse Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities of Wyndham. The current data provides a profile of the strengths and resources of Wyndham Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, as well as the nature of some of the barriers that exist and disadvantage experienced. Sustained engagement with the range of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people who are, and are not, represented in these statistics will play a central role in the cycles of planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of work towards reconciliation in Wyndham City.

⁷ Geoff Hocking, *Wyndham – Our Story*, 2013:31-49

⁸ Werribee Shire Banner, Thursday 3 January 1924, page 6.

⁹ For accounts and analysis, see Geoff Hocking, *Wyndham – Our Story*, 2013:43-49; David Moloney, *Shire of Melton heritage study: stage 2*. Melton Council, 2007:15-21.

¹⁰ The *Victorian Constitution Act (Section 1a, 2004)* acknowledges that the colony was established "without proper consultation, recognition or involvement of the Aboriginal people of Victoria".

¹¹ For more information, see the Wyndham History website for references to *Kulin Nation* and *European* settlement of specific sites in the region.

¹² The *Wyndham History website* cites Bulban, Cocoroc, Mambourin, Tarneit and Werribee as examples.

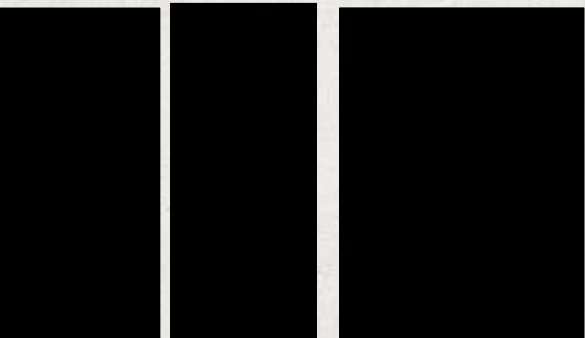
¹³ For example, "But the blacks disappeared from the district very suddenly. When asked how this happened, a member of the Wedge family related that one night they stole a bag of flour containing arsenic, and their screams could be heard for a mile away." in "Recollections of Mr W. Ison of Werribee" (Bacchus Marsh Express, [12 September 1903, page 4](#)) and "Early History of Werribee" (*Werribee Shire Banner, Thursday 3 January 1924, page 6*).

¹⁴ "Mental health and Aboriginal people and communities. 10-year mental health plan technical paper." State of Victoria, Department of Health and Human Services; August, 2015. Available at www.mentalhealthplan.vic.gov.au

¹⁵ For more information, see <http://profile.id.com.au/wyndham/indigenous-profile>

There are

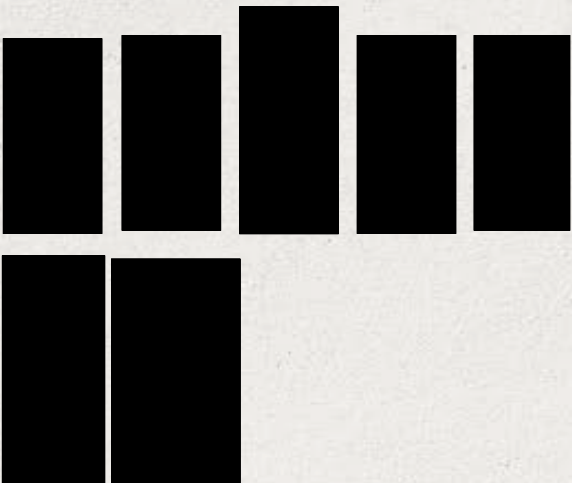
2511



Aboriginal and/or
Torres Strait Islanders
in Wyndham, that's

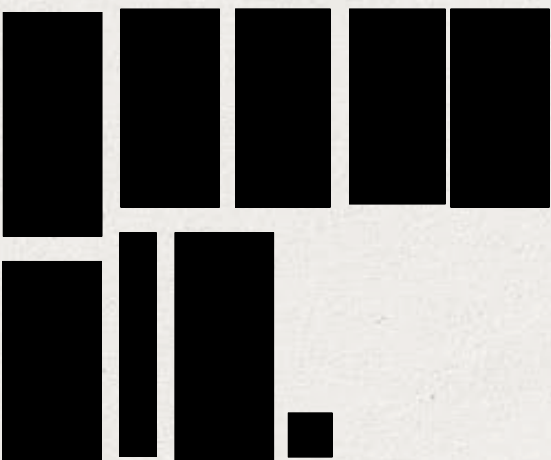
of the Aboriginal
and Torres Strait
Islander population
in Wyndham are

0.9%



of the Wyndham
City population.

798



Werribee has the highest
population, followed by
Point Cook with 384,
Wyndham Vale 363 and
Hoppers Crossing 346.

5%

of Aboriginal and
Torres Strait Islander
people in Wyndham
hold tertiary
qualifications.

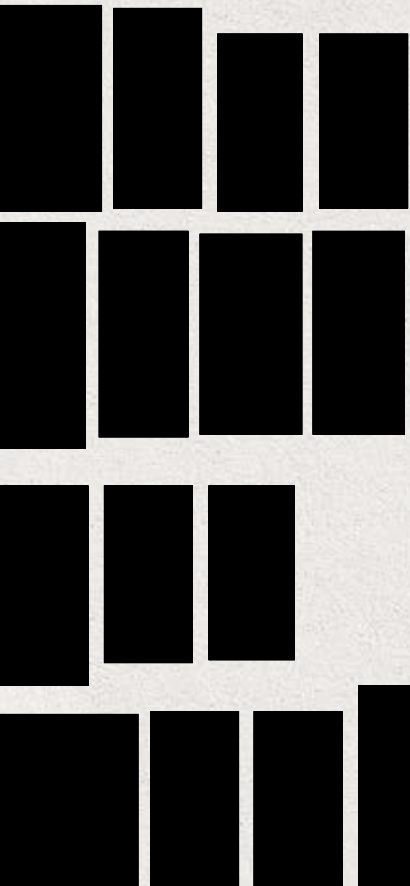
Around a quarter of
Aboriginal and Torres
Strait Islander households
in Wyndham



In 2016, around

25%

of Aboriginal and
Torres Strait Islander
household incomes
were classified as low.



Our Reconciliation Journey

As our reconciliation journey continues, Council acknowledges the many strengths and the resilience of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and cultures in Wyndham. Research demonstrates that support for reconciliation is growing as more Australians begin to understand the impacts of colonialism on First Nations families and communities. This RAP builds on the work of Council's Statement of Commitment and first RAP and outlines the actions Council will take as we work towards achieving our vision for reconciliation.

Reconciliation Australia leads the reconciliation process nationally, contributing research, advocacy and public policy support for over twenty years, to promote better understanding of, and action on reconciliation.¹⁶ Reconciliation has five dimensions - historical acceptance, race relations, equality and equity, institutional integrity, and unity. Proceeding along the road to reconciliation means achieving sustained progress with advancement in each of these dimensions.

Truth and empathy are important tools on the road to reconciliation. When we employ empathy, truth-telling helps us to discredit personal bias and reject discrimination with relentless determination. Locally, truth-telling is powerful. It lends itself especially to small communities because it helps people to connect to the five dimensions of reconciliation. Through the reconciliation process we begin to develop personal relationships and work together to build respect and understanding.

Council is committed to building relationships between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and non-Indigenous Australians, to foster a deep mutual respect that leads to continued and positive change in our municipality.

At its heart, reconciliation is about strengthening relationships between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and non-Indigenous peoples, for the benefit of all Australians.

~ Reconciliation Australia

Reconciliation Action Plan 2017 - 2019

Wyndham City took a significant step forward on the journey to reconciliation, with Council adopting its first Reconciliation Action Plan at the Ordinary Council Meeting on Tuesday 5 December 2017.

This two-year plan was developed to provide a framework for Council to realise its vision for Reconciliation with First Nations peoples and has helped successfully drive a broad range of actions across the organisation to progress the three key areas of building relationships, showing respect and improving opportunities with First Nations Peoples.

The development of the RAP included consultation with staff and the First Nations Community in Wyndham and was formally endorsed by Reconciliation Australia.

Overall, implementation of the RAP has been very successful, with the finalisation of Wunggurrwil Dhurrung Centre, tangible progress in practice and increased understanding visible across the organisation.

The *Reflection Document* is a snapshot of the personal journeys and impact of the work from a range of those involved. Many others have supported the work along the way, including Councillors, WRAC members, senior managers, staff and community.

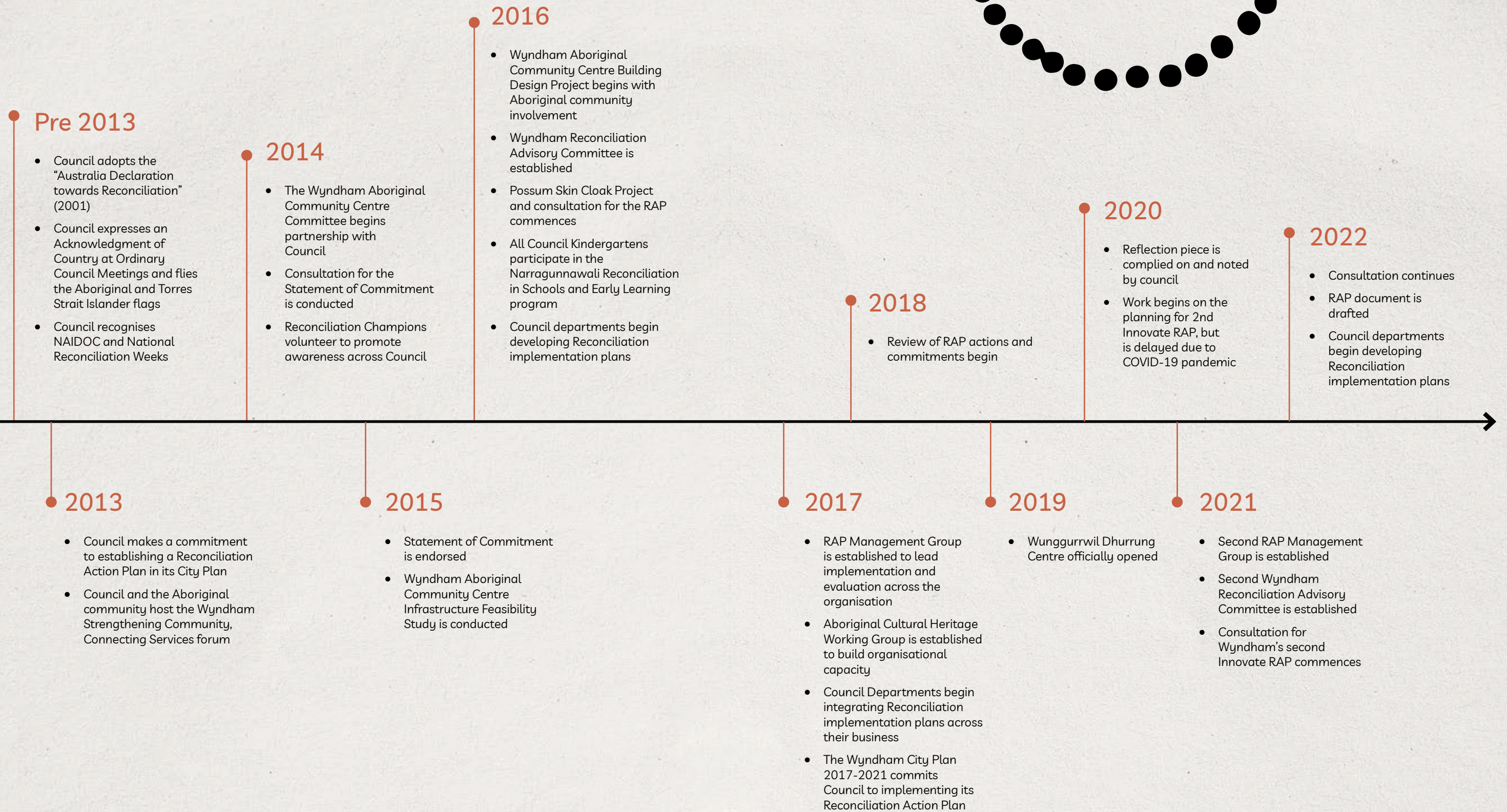
¹⁶ Reconciliation Australia is an independent not-for profit organisation, the lead body for reconciliation in Australia. We promote and facilitate reconciliation by building relationships, respect and trust between the wider Australian community and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

Reference: Reconciliation Australia (2021) *2021 state of Reconciliation in Australia Report. Moving from safe to brave*. Retrieved 21 October 2021: https://www.reconciliation.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/State-of-Reconciliation-2021-Summary-Report_web.pdf

Maree Clarke
River Reed Necklace, 2022

black dyed natural river reeds, cockatoo and crow feathers, twine
50 meters







The establishment of [The Wunggurrwil Dhurrung Centre](#) sits at the heart of Wyndham's first *Innovate RAP* (2017-2019) where partnership with the Wyndham Aboriginal Community Centre Committee (WACCC) at every stage was vital to Council's journey towards Reconciliation.

[The Wunggurrwil Dhurrung Centre](#), meaning 'strong heart' in Wadawurrung language is a meeting place located in Wyndham Vale. The first of its kind as a multi-purpose facility, it brings together Koling wada-ngal (Aboriginal Community Centre), Balim Balim Kindergarten and a Neighbourhood Community Centre.

The purpose of [Koling wada-ngal](#) (Walking Together) Aboriginal Corporation is to engage in an equal partnership with the Wyndham Aboriginal community and key stakeholders to work towards providing a culturally safe Aboriginal Community Centre.

The design and concept of this beautifully built centre was carefully thought out to ensure it was a culturally appropriate and safe space for everyone in our community to come together, meet people from different cultures and continue the process of reconciliation.

Wunggurrwil Dhurrung Centre officially opened on 6 November 2019, only a few months prior to the Covid pandemic surfacing.



Other key achievements include:

THEME	KEY ACHIEVEMENTS
Relationships	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Wyndham Council programmed several events for National Reconciliation Week throughout the life of the RAP. Highlights include annual Flag Raising Ceremonies, the Kulin Dreaming Festival, a special screening of the 'Warrigal Creek Massacre' documentary organised in collaboration with other Western Region Councils, tree planting days along the Werribee River, and various other events taking place across Council Community centres, the Art Gallery, Libraries and other Venues.Council participates in, facilitates and supports a wide range of networks including the Local Aboriginal Network, Aboriginal Services Network of Wyndham, the Young Mob Group and the Justice Network. Involvement in these groups and networks has continued to consolidate our pathway towards reconciliation by improving and strengthening relationships for the benefit of the broader community.Establishment and maintenance of several groups within Council including:<ul style="list-style-type: none">The Aboriginal Employee Advisory Group Staff that identify as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander are welcome to join a staff group that reflects on their experiences and what is and how to develop an inclusive and culturally sensitive workplace.The Cultural Heritage Working Group The formation of an internal Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Working Group resulted from an action of supporting collaboration with Registered Aboriginal Parties and Traditional Owner organisations for the protection of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural heritage and land management.The RAP Management Group A RAP Management Group was established with First Nations staff and senior staff representation from each council directorate including the Director of City Life as the executive sponsor of the RAP Management Group. This group developed, lead implementation and administered evaluation of the RAP.The Wyndham Reconciliation Advisory Committee (WRAC) The WRAC was formed following recruitment through an Expression of Interest process. First Nations people held majority membership and were joined by non-Indigenous community members who live, work, study, volunteer or have a connection to Wyndham. The WRAC met monthly and established the platform for engagement between First Nations people and communities with Council across a broad range of issues

Respect	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Ongoing dialogue with Wyndham Aboriginal Community Centre Committee (WACCC) and Koling wada-ngal.Education about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture and history is promoted across all early years through a variety of programs and training opportunities. Council Kindergartens were shortlisted as HART (Helping Achieve Reconciliation Together) award finalists for developing and implementing Reconciliation Action Plans through the <u>Reconciliation Australia Narragunnawali</u> program at each of our 23 kindergartens. This work has been embraced by over 3,000 children and their families in Wyndham, each year.By the end of 2019, 100 staff successfully completed an online First Nations Cultural Competency course.First Nations Cultural Heritage and Design Features are incorporated into the Truganina East Family Learning Centre and the Werribee Integrated Community Learning Hub. Meaningful Acknowledgement of Country plaques have been installed at all Council facilities.												
Opportunities	<p>In 2019 Council's RAP Management group ratified and endorsed the Supply Nation membership subscription with Wyndham being one of three Victorian councils to progress such an initiative.</p> <p>The table below shows the indicative direct council spend under the capital works budget achieved with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander businesses over the last five years. The figures below do not include indirect spend via head contract arrangements of sub-contractors that are Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander sole traders or businesses.</p> <table><tr><th>Financial Year</th><th>Total Spend</th></tr><tr><td>Year 1 (2015/16)</td><td>\$470,934.92</td></tr><tr><td>Year 2 (2016/17)</td><td>\$462,739.51</td></tr><tr><td>Year 3 (2017/18)</td><td>\$555,353.58</td></tr><tr><td>Year 4 (2018/19)</td><td>\$418,279.99</td></tr><tr><td>Year 5 (2019/20)</td><td>\$385,639.77</td></tr></table>	Financial Year	Total Spend	Year 1 (2015/16)	\$470,934.92	Year 2 (2016/17)	\$462,739.51	Year 3 (2017/18)	\$555,353.58	Year 4 (2018/19)	\$418,279.99	Year 5 (2019/20)	\$385,639.77
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Year 5 (2019/20)	\$385,639.77												

Governance

- The RAP was endorsed by Reconciliation Australia (RA) to use their RAP Framework in December 2017.
- Council participated in the 2018 national Workplace RAP Barometer, a biennial, national research study that measures attitudes and perceptions towards reconciliation, which helps to implement and improve the performance of our RAP. The national report and specific Wyndham City Council report provided baseline of data about Reconciliation from the perspective of employees in this specific workplace and comparison with other workplaces.
- Wyndham Aboriginal Community Centre Committee (WACCC) worked with Koling wada-ngal to understand and endorse cultural pillars and protocols for partnership with the Wunggurrwil Dhurrung Centre.

The Wyndham Reconciliation Advisory Committee (WRAC) and Local Aboriginal Network provided input and feedback about the implementation of the RAP across the organisation. Evidence of this chapter in our Reconciliation journey has been captured in the *Reflection Document*.

This document is a snapshot of the personal journeys and impact of the work from a range of those involved.

"It was a successful journey; we came with nothing in our hands and achieved a lot. As long as we have the same level of commitment as the last group of people, we will keep this journey going." BC ~ WRAC Member

Learnings and Challenges

Wyndham City Council is learning and growing as an organisation as it progresses through the reconciliation journey. Along the way we have discovered that it is difficult to make progress in areas where we did not have dedicated resources. Areas such as living cultural heritage management and First Nations employment were significant in highlighting this learning for us and were both determining factors that resulted in the decision to embark on our second Innovate RAP.

Feedback from Reconciliation Australia suggested that Council would have been in a good position to pursue a Stretch RAP if the following documents were developed and implemented before the conclusion of the 2017-2019 RAP:

- Cultural Learning Strategy
- Cultural Protocols Document
- Employment and Retention Strategy

Coming to the realisation that we should not progress to a Stretch RAP demonstrates that the organisation is responding actively to the challenges and earnest about engagement in reconciliation.

Managing the RAP

A RAP Management Group has been established with senior staff representation from each Council Directorate and 6 First Nations staff to develop, lead implementation and oversee evaluation of this RAP. The Director of City Life is the executive sponsor of the RAP Management Group.

Aboriginal and non-Indigenous employees have taken up opportunities to be involved at each stage of this Action Plan's development. They have exercised leadership and contributed to the RAP Management Group their department Reconciliation implementation planning, Advisory and Working Groups. At the time of writing, there were six employees on the RAP Management Group who identify as First Nations People.



RAP Management Group Members

Executive Sponsor – Chief Executive Officer

POSITION	DEPARTMENT
CEO's Office	
Chief of Staff	
City Life Directorate	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Director	City Life
<ul style="list-style-type: none">ManagerCoordinator First NationsReconciliation LeadPartnership & Centre FacilitatorCommunity Development Officer	Community Development
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Manager	Libraries & Learning
<ul style="list-style-type: none">ManagerCommunity Connections and Care Administration Officer	Community Support
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Manager	Sport & Recreation
Corporate Services	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Director	Corporate Services
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Coordinator	Probity Strategy & Planning
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Manager	People & Capability
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Executive Manager	Corporate Affairs
City Operations	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Director	City Operations
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Manager	Open Space
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Manager	Facilities and Projects
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Manager	Manager Roads & Maintenance
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Manager	Infrastructure Services Planning
City Planning & Livability	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Director	City Planning & Livability
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Manager	Strategic Planning & Property
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Manager	Transport and Sustainability
<ul style="list-style-type: none">ManagerCoordinator Arts, Culture & Events	Arts, Events & Cultural Venues
<ul style="list-style-type: none">ManagerLandscape Architect Subdivisions	Planning, Building and Health
Executive Manager Business Development	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">ManagerProjects Coordinator	Major Projects

Wyndham Reconciliation Advisory Committee

The second Reconciliation Advisory Committee was formed in August 2021 with representation of community stakeholders to advise Council through the adoption of its second Innovate RAP. Co-chaired by a Wyndham City Councillor and a First Nations community member, it provides a forum to strengthen and build on the achievements of the previous WRAC. The consolidation between First Nations and non-Indigenous community members with Council about shared concerns relating to Reconciliation in Wyndham is observable through many committee members highlighting the positive progress that they have experienced since the adoption of the last RAP.

NAME	COUNTRY
Kym Willis (Co Chair)	Comes from Gangulu Country Lives on Bunurong Land and works on Wurundjeri Land
Cr Jennie Barrera (Co Chair)	Lives and works on Bunurong Land
Aunt Judy Dalton-Walsh	Comes from and lives on Wathaurong Land
Uncle Brian Campbell	From Minjerribah Country and lives on Bunurong Land
Kelly Lehmann	Bunurong Woman
Samantha Bennett	Bunurong Woman
Dylan Wishart	From Dharug Country and lives on Bunurong Land
Robert Monohan	Proud Taungurung Man living on Bunurong Land
Kristy Gray	Lives on Wathaurong Land
Elizabeth McPherson	Lives on Bunurong Land and works on Wadawurrung Land
Trish Crossin	Lives on Bunurong Land
Narelle Keleher - Reconciliation Lead Wyndham City Council	Lives on Bunurong Land and works on Bunurong Land and Wadawurrung Land



Wyndham's Reconciliation Action Plan

Council is implementing a second Innovate RAP of 2-years duration that will commence when the RAP is formally endorsed by Reconciliation Australia.

The RAP model focusses the commitment of Council to Reconciliation on achieving outcomes under the four themes of:

► Relationships

► Respect

► Opportunities

► Truth – Telling

Which are underpinned by Governance

The RAP has 4 columns to describe how Council will deliver its actions:

- The **Action** describes the broad action and includes the objective that Council will focus on achieving.
- **Deliverables** should be activities and initiatives that will enable Council to achieve its objective.
- **Timelines** are specific dates allocated to each deliverable throughout the RAP. If the action is ongoing, the date listed indicates the date that Council will review the action for effectiveness or when Council expects to have achieved milestones.
- The **Responsibility** to delivering Council's commitments is distributed across the organisation, to promote shared ownership to delivering the Actions. Responsibilities are allocated to specific management roles to increase accountability.



Relationships

Council commits to meaningful engagement with Traditional Owners, local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and communities, and First Nations stakeholders and organisations to ensure relationships are the foundation of our reconciliation journey.

We commit to nurturing these relationships to build a better understanding between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and all Wyndham residents to lead to a more inclusive and safe community.

RELATIONSHIPS – 6 ACTIONS & 35 DELIVERABLES

Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
1. Establish and maintain mutually beneficial relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and organisations.	Meet with local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and organisations to develop guiding principles and ways of working for growing relationships with Council.	June 2024	Reconciliation Lead
	Develop and implement an engagement plan to work with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and organisations.	Dec 2024	Reconciliation Lead
	Establish a Partnership Agreement between Council and the Local Elders Group.	June 2024	Manager Community Development
	Develop a Memorandum of Understanding and Respect with the Wadawurrung Traditional Owners Aboriginal Corporation and Bunurong Land Council Aboriginal Corporation and work closely with other Traditional Owner Groups.	June 2024	Manager Community Development
2. Build relationships through celebrating National Reconciliation Week (NRW).	Develop a schedule of internal and external National Reconciliation Week events that staff can attend and promote across the organisation.	27 May - 3 June 2024 & 2025	Coordinator Community Strengthening
	Register all our National Reconciliation Week events on Reconciliation Australia's National Reconciliation Week website.	27 May - 3 June 2024 & 2025	Coordinator Community Strengthening
	Invite First Nations people to speak at organisational National Reconciliation Week events.	27 May - 3 June 2024 & 2025	Coordinator Community Strengthening Support: Libraries & Learning
	Circulate Reconciliation Australia's National Reconciliation Week resources and reconciliation materials to our staff.	27 May - 3 June 2024 & 2025	Coordinator Community Strengthening
	RAP Management Group members to participate in events to recognise and celebrate, National Reconciliation Week.	27 May - 3 June 2024 & 2025	Manager Community Development

	Encourage and support staff and senior leaders to participate in at least one event to recognise and celebrate National Reconciliation Week.	27 May - 3 June 2024 & 2025	Coordinator Community Strengthening
	Partner with community to organise one National Reconciliation Week event for community and staff each year.	27 May - 3 June 2024 & 2025	Coordinator Community Strengthening
3. Promote reconciliation through our sphere of influence.	Develop and implement a staff engagement strategy to raise awareness of reconciliation across our workforce.	June 2024	Lead: Coordinator First Nations Support: Manger People & Capability
	Publicly communicate our commitment to reconciliation via Council website and publications and implement strategies to engage our staff in reconciliation.	June 2024	Executive Manager Corporate Affairs
	Explore opportunities to positively influence our external stakeholders to drive reconciliation outcomes.	June 2025	Coordinator Community Strengthening
	Promote key organisational reconciliation activities throughout our stakeholder network.	June 2025	Coordinator Community Strengthening
	Collaborate with RAP organisations and other like-minded organisations to develop innovative approaches to advance reconciliation.	June 2025	Coordinator Community Strengthening
	Promote and distribute information about Koling wada-ngal at the Wunggurrwil Dhurrung Centre including programs, activities and services via Koorie Mail, WYNi (internal intranet), land councils and wider Wyndham community.	Dec 2023	Coordinator Community Hubs
	Include a Reconciliation @ Wyndham presentation in the Corporate Induction.	June 2024	Manager People & Capability
	Review our Statement of Commitment as required	March 2024	Reconciliation Lead
	Foster First Nations and non-Aboriginal leadership and relationships through the Wyndham Community Leadership Program with a focus on Reconciliation as the program theme.	Dec 2023	Coordinator Community Strengthening

4. Promote positive race relations through anti-discrimination strategies.	Conduct a review of HR policies and procedures to identify existing anti-discrimination provisions, and future needs.	Dec 2024	Lead: Coordinator First Nations Support: Manger People & Capability
	Educate senior leaders on the effects of racism.	Dec 2024	Lead: Coordinator First Nations Support: Manger People & Capability
	Be an active participant in the Welcoming Clubs Active Inclusion Project	June 2024	Team Leader Sport Development & Community Participation
	Engage with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff and/or Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander advisors to consult on our anti-discrimination policy	Dec 2023	Manager People & Capability
	Develop, implement, and communicate an anti-discrimination policy for our organisation.	June 2024	Lead: Coordinator First Nations Support: Manger People & Capability
	Build capacity and support councillors to participate in educational opportunities around anti-discrimination.	June 2024	Executive Manager Corporate Affairs
5. Demonstrate a commitment to protect First Nations living culture through land management projects.	Ensure that endangered or significant flora and fauna is protected in the construction and upgrade of community infrastructure, reserves, open space, revegetation and landscaping.	June 2024	Lead: Manager Transport & Sustainability Support: Manager Open Space / Manager Facilities and Projects / Manager Roads and Maintenance / Manager Sport & Recreation
	In partnership with the Registered Aboriginal Party, conduct joint land management activities in reserves located within the area including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Natural resource management Cultural heritage management Controlled burns Revegetation Weed control Pest animal control Flora and fauna assessments 	June 2024	Manager Open Space

6. Support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander self-determination in the planning, coordination and delivery of services.	Work in partnership with the Aboriginal Services Network of the West by establishing common values, goals, mutual respect and trust.	June 2024	Coordinator Community Strengthening
	Work in partnership with local and regional networks to promote collaboration and improve access to culturally appropriate services for First Nations people across the life stages.	June 2025	Manager Community Support
	Support organisations to host and deliver events inclusive of all ages and partner with Koling wada-ngal at Wunggurrwil Dhurrung Centre and other community groups in the delivery of programs.	March 2024	Coordinator Youth Services
	Ensure consultation and participation with the Registered Aboriginal Party, Koling wada-ngal and local Aboriginal communities in every stage of the planning, delivery and development of new and existing community infrastructure, as appropriate to their areas of authority and interest.	June 2025	Coordinator Community Infrastructure
	Ensure that strategic planning and service coordination is informed by current Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population data for Council to support improved outcomes in health, education and employment.	Dec 2024	Lead: Strategy, Research & Engagement Support: Coordinator Social Policy
	Update the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander profile on Council's website to inform priorities for planning and service reform in Council departments. https://profile.id.com.au/wyndham/indigenous-keystatistics	Dec 2023	Strategy, Research & Engagement
	Engage with Koling wada-ngal, local Elders, First Nations stakeholders, land councils and community organisations around the establishment of First Nations-led community spaces at Wunggurrwil Dhurrung Centre.	Dec 2024	Coordinator Community Hubs



Auntie Marlene Gilson
Waa Waa - Crow Feathers, 2021
 Acrylic on linen
 61 x 76.3

Respect

We value all people and we celebrate and respect diversity. We respectfully recognise the Traditional Owners of the land Wyndham is being built on and Acknowledge all First Nations people living across the City of Wyndham.

By providing opportunities for employees to learn about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, histories and achievements, we will create a culturally safe and inclusive workplace.

Reconciliation through Acknowledgement of Country



At the Grange Kindergarten the children recite their Acknowledgment of Country at the beginning of each day as a whole group experience. The children are confident and capable to recite the Acknowledgement of Country on their own, some children lead in front of their peers. Throughout the year the children will participate in whole group times discussing environmental issues, respect of the land and respect for each other.

Our Acknowledgment with actions:

Here is the land (arms open wide)
Here is the sky (arms pointing to the sky)
Here are my friends (arms open to everyone)
and here am I. (arms hugging self)
We'd like to thank the People of the Kulin Nation
for the land on which we learn and play.

RESPECT – 7 ACTIONS & 28 DELIVERABLES

Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
1. Increase understanding, value and recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, histories, knowledge and rights through cultural learning.	Conduct a review of cultural learning needs within our organisation.	June 2024	Lead: Coordinator First Nations Support: Manger People & Capability
	Develop and implement an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural learning strategy for staff at all levels that builds cultural safety through different learning modes (online, workshops, and cultural immersion).	June 2024	Lead: Coordinator First Nations Support: Manger People & Capability
	Consult with the Registered Aboriginal Party and/or local Traditional Owners to inform our cultural awareness training.	June 2024	Lead: Coordinator First Nations Support: Manager People & Capability
	Provide opportunities for Councillors, RAP Management Group members, HR managers and other key leadership staff to participate in formal and structured cultural learning each year.	June 2024	Lead: Coordinator First Nations Support: Executive Manager Corporate Affairs (Councillors)
	Promote Reconciliation Australia's Share Our Pride online toolkit to all employees.	June 2024 June 2025	Coordinator First Nations
2. Demonstrate respect to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples by observing cultural protocols.	Update and communicate the cultural protocol document for Welcome to Country and Acknowledgement of Country.	Dec 2023	Lead: Executive Manager Corporate Affairs Support: Coordinator First Nations
	Increase staff's understanding of the purpose and significance behind cultural protocols, including Acknowledgement of Country and Welcome to Country protocols.	Dec 2023	Lead: Executive Manager Corporate Affairs Support: Coordinator First Nations
	Provide information for staff around the cultural significance of Acknowledgment of Country that reflects an individual setting, place suburb of Wyndham through the development of a fact sheet resource and map.	June 2024	Coordinator First Nations
	Develop updated Acknowledgement of Country statement templates for staff email signatures.	June 2024	Manager Corporate Affairs

	Invite a local Traditional Owner or Custodian to provide a Welcome to Country or other appropriate cultural protocol at a minimum of one Council meeting and another significant event each year.	June 2024 June 2025	Manager Corporate Affairs
	Include an Acknowledgement of Country or other appropriate protocols at the commencement of important meetings.	June 2024	All Leadership
3. Build respect for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and histories by celebrating NAIDOC Week.	Encourage all council staff to attend NAIDOC week and other First Nations events during the year.	July 2024 July 2025	Lead: People & Capability Support: All Leadership
	Enable all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff to participate in their culture and communities during NAIDOC Week.	July 2024 July 2025	Lead: People & Capability Support: All Leadership
	Promote and encourage participation in external NAIDOC events to all Council staff and community through book displays and posters.	July 2024 July 2025	Manager Libraries & Learning
	Support Councillors to attend key local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander events, gallery exhibitions and performances both during NAIDOC Week and other times during the year.	July 2024 July 2025	Executive Manager Corporate Affairs
	Partner with community to organise at least one NAIDOC Week event for community and council staff each year	July 2024 July 2025	Coordinator Community Strengthening
4. Create and maintain culturally welcoming and safe environments for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff and community members.	Consult with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff to develop priorities to improve cultural safety in the workplace.	June 2024	Lead: Coordinator First Nations Support: Manager People & Capability
	Ensure all Council facilities are and continue to be welcoming and safe for all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people by providing visual evidence of Acknowledgement of the Traditional Owners, demonstrating reciprocity and seeking cultural knowledge.	June 2025	Coordinator Neighbourhood Hubs
	Provide opportunities for Traditional Owners and other Aboriginal and Torres Strait artists to develop and present their creative practice through programming at the Wyndham Cultural Centre.	Dec 2024 Dec 2025	Manager Arts, Events & Cultural Venues

5. Explore opportunities for incorporating First Nations place names, languages and cultural heritage information in a range of existing infrastructure and future developments.	Work in partnership with Traditional Owner groups to respectfully include signage or signposting that acknowledges the land being used for community infrastructure, paths and trails, reserves and open space.	June 2024	Lead : Manager Transport and Sustainability Support: Manager Open Space / Manager Facilities and Projects / Manager Sport and Recreation
	Continue to engage the Victorian Aboriginal Corporation for Languages and Traditional Owner groups to provide guidelines for respectful naming processes related to naming new and existing community infrastructure.	June 2025	Coordinator Community Infrastructure
	Consult with the Registered Aboriginal Party regarding use of language and guidelines for respectful naming processes related to naming new and exsisting community infrastructure.	June 2025	Executive Manager Corporate Affairs
6. Explore opportunities to raise the awareness of Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander People and cultures in the community through Councils delivery of Early Education & Care Services (EECS).	Include a question in family surveys to determine the level of understanding of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives in early education program and practice.	June 2024 June 2025	Coordinator Early Education & Care
	Use data collected from family surveys and work in partnership with First Nations EECS staff and families to investigate opportunities to strengthen cultural awareness.	June 2024 June 2025	Coordinator Early Education & Care
	Commit to the implementation monitoring and evaluation of Narragunnawali across all Wyndham Early Education & Care Services.	June 2024 June 2025	Coordinator Early Education & Care



7. Develop and implement strategies to promote living cultural heritage knowledge across the Council.	Create and resource an Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Resource Project Officer position, to develop, coordinate and implement as required a proactive Aboriginal Cultural Heritage strategy that links Council's land management with the interests of Traditional Owner groups for culturally significant land.	Dec 2023	Director Planning & Liveability
	Engage with First Nations communities, Koling wada-ngal and Registered Aboriginal Parties to consult on the acknowledgement of living cultural heritage in the following key projects:	June 2024 June 2025	Manager Open Space Manager Facilities & Projects Manager Roads and Maintenance Manager Sport and Recreation Manager Transport & Sustainability
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Coastal Marine Management Plan (Open Space) Greening the Pipeline (Open Space) Lower Werribee River Action Plan (Open Space) Werribee Township Regional Park (Open Space) Open Space Strategy Refresh (Open Space) Chirnside Park & The K Road Cliffs (Facilities & Projects) Roads Infrastructure (Roads & Maintenance) Existing and future sport and recreation sites (Sport and Recreation) Active Transport Program (Transport & Sustainability) 		
	Deliver Community of Practice sessions that will focus on embedding cultural heritage and understanding cultural sensitivity in projects, featuring presentations from local Traditional Owner Organisations and Aboriginal Victoria.	June 2024 June 2025	Manager Infrastructure & Service Planning

Opportunities

It is important that local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander residents are supported to better determine their future. Council will continue to look for ways to provide opportunities within all areas of Council's business for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and communities through employment and professional development, economic and business opportunities, to ensure our programs and services are culturally safe.

Reconciliation embedded in program delivery



The children have been drawing a lot of their own interpretations throughout the year during their journey of reconciliation and having been constantly drawing indigenous symbols, paintings, and also enjoying many interactions, incursions and experiences with Traditional Elders of Indigenous history and culture.



OPPORTUNITIES – 5 ACTIONS & 30 DELIVERABLES

Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
1. Improve employment outcomes by increasing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander recruitment, retention, leadership and professional development.	Collect information on our current Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staffing to inform future employment and professional development opportunities.	June 2024	Manager People & Capability
	Review HR and recruitment procedures and policies to remove barriers to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander participation in our workplace.	Dec 2024	Lead: Coordinator First Nations Support: Manager People & Capability
	Develop a strategy to offer learning and internship opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander tertiary students.	June 2024	Lead: Coordinator First Nations Support: Manager Community Development
	Engage with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff to consult on our recruitment, retention and professional development strategy.	June 2024	Lead: Coordinator First Nations Support: Manager People & Capability
	Develop and implement an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander recruitment, retention and professional development strategy.	June 2024	Lead: Coordinator First Nations Support: Manager People & Capability
	Establish and support First Nations-identified roles in strategic priorities areas, for example Youth Services and Maternal and Child Health.	June 2024	Lead: Coordinator First Nations Support: Manager People & Capability
	Develop and deliver an effective process for collecting, storing and using data about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff to inform employment outcomes.	June 2024	Manager People & Capability

	Include in all job advertisements 'Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are encouraged to apply'	Dec 2023	Manager People & Capability
	Support and resource the Aboriginal Staff Inclusion Group to facilitate connection and support with and for First Nations Staff.	June 2023	Coordinator First Nations
	Advertise all vacancies in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander networks and media, for example, the Wunggurrwil Dhurrung Centre newsletter and the Koori Mail.	June 2023	Manager People & Capability
	Explore opportunities and ways to increase our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff employed in our workforce.	June 2024	Lead: Senior Leadership Team Support: Coordinator First Nations
2. Increase Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander supplier diversity to support improved economic and social outcomes.	Review the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander corporate procurement strategy to increase supply from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander owned businesses.	June 2024	Coordinator Probity Strategy & Planning
	In accordance with the Local Government Act 2020 (VIC) prepare a Procurement Policy and Suite of Guidelines that drives increased engagement via a specific sourcing process for Aboriginal Torres Strait Islander Businesses & Sole Traders.	June 2024	Coordinator Probity Strategy & Planning
	Increase Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander economic growth through our developing partnership with Kinaway Services.	June 2024	Lead: Coordinator Probity Strategy & Planning Support: Manager Community Development
	Continue committing to the Platinum Partnership with Kinaway Chamber of Commerce enabling objectives of training and engagement across the organisation utilising Kinaway Services.	June 2025	Coordinator Probity Strategy & Planning
	Continue to communicate opportunities for procurement of goods and services from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander businesses to staff through the development of a dedicated intranet page.	June 2025	Lead: Coordinator Probity Strategy & Planning Support: Manager Community Development

2. Increase Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander supplier diversity to support improved economic and social outcomes. [continued]	Review and update procurement practices to remove barriers to procuring goods and services from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander businesses.	June 2024	Coordinator Probity Strategy & Planning
	Provide one annual information seminar for First Nations organisations to outline and explain the process on how to complete a Council tender application.	June 2024 June 2025	Coordinator Probity Strategy & Planning
	Continue to develop commercial relationships with Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander businesses for the procurement of goods, services and works.	June 2025	Coordinator Probity Strategy & Planning
	Utilise the Kinaway Membership to establish a formal training program of materials for roll out across council by Procurement in relation to engagement and collaboration with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander businesses.	June 2025	Coordinator Probity Strategy & Planning
3. Create employment opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Artists.	In consultation with the Registered Aboriginal Party, engage a First Nations Artist to commission a public artwork of significance and scale. Thematically the creative brief will be developed as a site-specific work that expands the practice of a First Nations artist and thematically responds to the lived experience of reconciliation in action.	Dec 2024	Manager Arts, Events & Cultural Venues
	Set targets for the successful inclusion of First Nations artists in art programs and arts development initiatives including mentoring and grant programs.	Dec 2023	Manager Arts, Events & Cultural Venues
	Recruit a First Nations Identified role to strengthen relationships with the First Nations community and Koling wada-ngal through cultural programming and community engagement, resulting in increased usage and visitation within Cultural Venues and input and guidance on the Wyndham Cultural Centre Redevelopment.	Dec 2023	Manager Arts, Events & Cultural Venues
	Engage a First Nations Producer to create a new one-off event of scale and beauty along the Werribee River. The work will have a consultative methodology and use performance and technology to create an immersive and experiential event that celebrates culture and community.	June 2024	Manager Arts, Events & Cultural Venues
	Curate an exhibition that responds to the lived experience of First Nations people in Victoria. The show will feature Victorian First Nation's artists that explore self-determination and sovereignty deeply within their work and practice.	June 2025	Manager Arts, Events & Cultural Venues

4. Advocate and support improved outcomes for First Nations people in all Victorian State planned infrastructure.	Work in partnership with the Registered Aboriginal Party, State Government and key Aboriginal organisations such as VACCA and the Regional Aboriginal Justice Advisory Committee to inform service planning.	June 2025	Coordinator Service Planning
	Liase with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community networks and Koling wada-ngal to ensure that local First Nations stakeholder engagement appraises and influences service-planning for projects such as the proposed Wyndham Justice Precinct, Point Cook Community Hospital, Early Parenting Centre and schools.	June 2024 June 2025	Corodinator Service Planning
	Engage with Traditional Owners to inform and enrich Council-led structure plans, master plans, place plans, place-making projects and public space enhancement works.	June 2024 June 2025	Manager Strategic Planning & Property
5. Ensure that Reconciliation priorities are incorporated into the Council Plan and integrated into all strategic plans and policies.	Implement respectful approaches and tools in community engagement processes to make certain that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander voices are heard.	June 2024 June 2025	Strategy, Research & Engagement
	Incorporate consultation with Aboriginal Stakeholders into review processes for strategic plans and polices.	June 2024 June 2025	Strategy, Research & Engagement



Truth-Telling

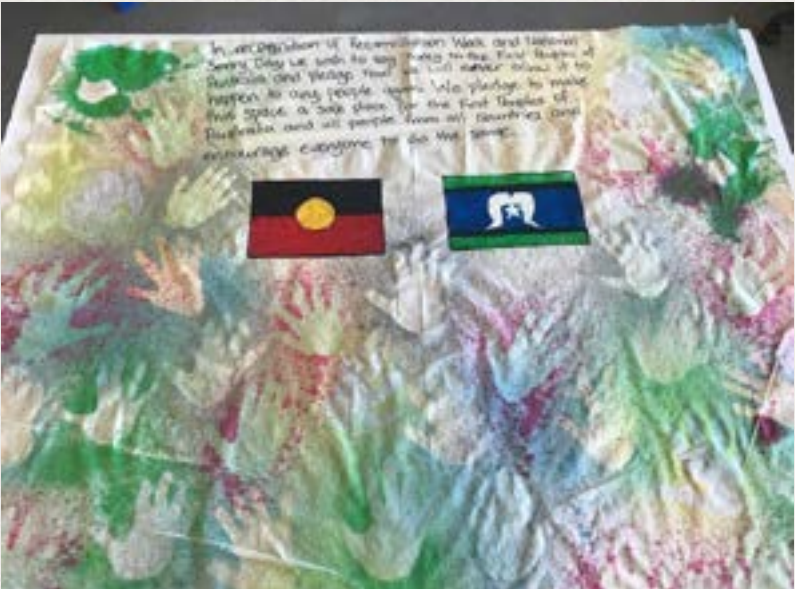
Wyndham City Council is learning about the importance of truth-telling and the role it has in strengthening shared understanding of the impacts of colonisation and removal of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

Truth-telling is about acknowledgement of and liberation from past and continued oppression. It's an opportunity for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to share their stories so we can hear the unpalatable. Wyndham City Council has not leaned into the Truth Telling space previously. This is a new initiative for the organisation and there is commitment to begin the long and uncomfortable process of uncovering the truth. Everyone has the right to know the truth and play a part in reconciliation and justice.

Reconciliation through a Flag Raising ceremony

We fly the three flags daily as part of our morning yarn the children are involved with raising the flags daily, while the flags are being raised the children can explain the meaning behind each flag, they have learned how to raise the flags, and how to care for the flags when putting them up and taking them down, we also ensure the flags do not touch the ground as a mark of respect.

Our flagpoles can be viewed from the street by the public and the sporting community next to our Kindergarten. We are very proud of our flags and the knowledge that our children have developed.



TRUTH TELLING – 1 ACTION & 4 DELIVERABLES

Action	Deliverables	Timeline	Responsibility
1. Investigate and begin to adopt safe and respectful Truth Telling opportunities and approaches across the organisation.	Research approaches and resources that have been specifically developed to support the Truth Telling process.	June 2024	Lead: Coordinator Community Strengthening Support: Manager Libraries & Learning
	Establish partnerships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and organisations focused on Truth Telling.	Dec 2024	Lead: Coordinator Community Strengthening Support: Manager Libraries & Learning
	Partner with community to acknowledge National Sorry Day through a planned activity that supports community and staff engagement.	26 May 2024 26 May 2025	Coordinator Community Strengthening
	Increase the delivery of youth programs at Wunggurrwil Dhurrung Centre to strengthen connections between Elders and young people, support intergenerational storytelling and assist cultural transmission.	Dec 2024	Coordinator Youth Services



Governance

To ensure success, Wyndham City will set clear objectives and monitor our results. We commit to tracking our progress and reporting our achievements, challenges and learnings.

Reconciliation through Acknowledgment of Country

Penrose Kindergarten acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of Country by reciting the Acknowledgement of Country which children recite every morning as a large group alongside a poem.

In collaboration with educators, we discuss why do we say here is the land, the people and sky and how does it link to the Aboriginal flag. This evoked a change to our wording, and we developed a new daily acknowledgment which describes the flag. This gives children a better understanding of the flag and why we recite this Acknowledgment of Country.



GOVERNANCE – 5 ACTIONS & 17 DELIVERABLES

Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
1.Establish and maintain an effective RAP Management group to drive governance of the RAP.	Maintain Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander representation on the RMG.	Sept 2023 Dec 2023 March 2024 June 2024 Sept 2024 Dec 2024 March 2025 June 2025	Reconciliation Lead
	Establish and apply a Terms of Reference for the RMG	Dec 2023	Reconciliation Lead
	Meet at least four times per year to drive and monitor RAP implementation.	Sept 2023 Dec 2023 March 2024 June 2024 Sept 2024 Dec 2024 March 2025 June 2025	Reconciliation Lead
2. Provide appropriate support for effective implementation of RAP commitments	Define resource needs for RAP implementation.	Dec 2023	Manager Community Development Support: All Leadership
	Engage our senior leaders and other staff in the delivery of RAP commitments.	June 2024 June 2025	Reconciliation Lead
	Define and maintain appropriate systems to track, measure and report on RAP commitments.	Dec 2023 June 2024 Dec 2024 June 2025	Lead: Strategy, Research & Engagement Support: Reconciliation Lead
	Appoint and maintain an internal RAP Champion from Senior Management.	Dec 2023 Dec 2024 Dec 2025	Chief Executive Officer

3. Build accountability and transparency through reporting RAP achievements, challenges and learnings both internally and externally.	Contact Reconciliation Australia to verify that our primary and secondary contact details are up to date, to ensure we do not miss out on important RAP correspondence.	June 2024 June 2025	Reconciliation Lead
	Complete and submit the annual RAP Impact Measurement Questionnaire to Reconciliation Australia.	30 September 2023 2024	Reconciliation Lead
	Publicly report our RAP achievements, challenges and learning, progress annually at the Council Meeting closet to Reconciliation Week and WRAC.	Dec 2023 Dec 2024 Dec 2025	Reconciliation Lead
	Participate in Reconciliation Australia's biennial Workplace RAP Barometer.	May 2024	Reconciliation Lead
	Report RAP progress to all staff and senior leaders quarterly.	Sept 2023 & 2024 Dec 2023 & 2024 March 2024 & 2025 June 2024 & 2025	Reconciliation Lead
4. Continue our reconciliation journey by developing our next RAP.	Liaise with Reconciliation Australia to develop a new RAP based on learnings, challenges and achievements.	July 2024	Reconciliation Lead
	Register via Reconciliation Australia's website to begin developing our next RAP.	July 2024	Reconciliation Lead
5. Establish mechanisms for First Nations community members to provide advice and guidance in the development and monitoring of the RAP.	Continue to support the Wyndham Reconciliation Advisory Committee to identify ways to integrate the RAP across Council.	June 2024	Reconciliation Lead
	Deliver governance training for WRAC members.	June 2024	Reconciliation Lead
	Reconciliation Lead and Community Development Manager to meet with the Wyndham Reconciliation Advisory Committee a minimum of four times a year to monitor and evaluate this RAP.	Sept 2023 & 2024 Dec 2023 & 2024 March 2024 & 2025 June 2024 & 2025	Reconciliation Lead



First Nations Unit

Wyndham City Council

Phone: 1300 023 411

Email: mail@wyndham.vic.gov.au

Copies of this Reconciliation Action Plan can be downloaded from **www.wyndham.vic.gov.au/reconciliation-action-plan-2023-2025** and can be made available in alternate formats. For assistance, please phone 1300 023 411 or email mail@wyndham.vic.gov.au.

For Translating and Interpreting Services:

TIS: Phone 131 450 then ask for 1300 023 411

TTY users phone 133 677 then ask for 1300 023 411

Speak and Listen (speech-to-speech relay) users phone 1300 555 727 then ask for 1300 023 411

Internet relay users connect to the NRS (see www.relayservice.com.au for details) and then ask for 1300 023 411



