

REFLECT
RECONCILIATION
ACTION PLAN
JULY 2018 - JULY 2019



RECONCILIATION
ACTION PLAN

REFLECT

Hepburn

SHIRE COUNCIL

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Hepburn Shire Council wish to acknowledge the Dja Dja Wurrung People of which the Hepburn region resides and operates within.

We acknowledge that their forbearers are the Traditional Owners of the area and have been for many thousands of years. The Djaara have performed age old ceremonies of celebration, initiation and renewal.

We recognise their resilience through dispossession, and is a testament to their culture and tradition which is strong and thriving.

We acknowledge their living culture and their unique role in the life of this region.



Artwork and Design- Racquel Kerr, Nyauwi Art & Design

Racquel is a Traditional Owner of the Djaara People. Her artwork titled 'Our Creation Spirit' is a reflection of the Creator Spirit Bunjil, who shaped Djaara Country and created the people, land, lore and ensured the continuity of life. Djaara Country (Djankdak) is reflected in Bunjil's wings as clan groups are connected by rivers, mountains, kinship, and lore.

"We as Djarra People are shaped and owned by this land, and follow our Ancestors path before us."

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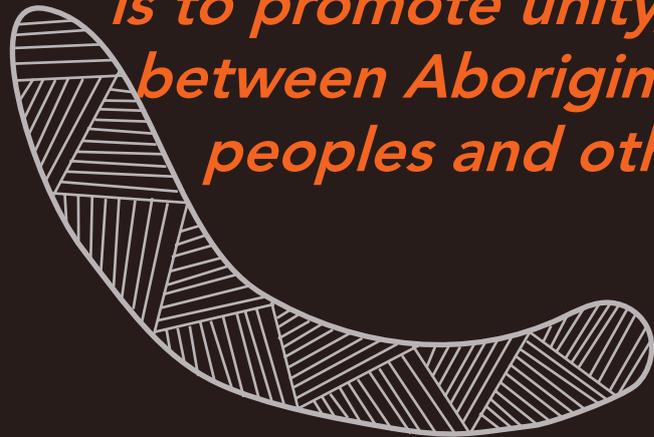
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Hepburn Shire Council's vision for reconciliation is to promote unity, respect and understanding between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and other community members.



We aim for all community members to be provided the same, highest quality services from our organisation. We aim to promote awareness and respect across the community to build a better future for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. Council aspires for all staff, Councillors and community members to refer to Council as "Our Council."

With our Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP), Council seeks to ensure reconciliation is at the core of our organisation and a foundation to all our services.

OUR ACKNOWLEDGEMENT FOR RECONCILIATION

Council recognises the Dja Dja Wurrung People as the Traditional Owners of the land on which the Shire is predominantly located. Council also recognises the many other Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community members across the Shire who make up the vibrant communities to which our organisation provides services.

We commit to working positively today and in the future with the Dja Dja Wurrung peoples and other Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community members to learn, acknowledge and move forward together with the whole Hepburn Shire community.

Council envisages that a process of reconciliation begins when we as a community become informed about our history. The history of the Shire is typically associated with squatters, Swiss Italian settlers, gold seekers and timber getters. Our Shire has a rich Aboriginal past, present and future. Our organisation acknowledges that there is more than one voice or one memory making up the story of Hepburn Shire. Council seeks to recognise and promote the collections of stories that make up the shared history of the Shire.

We acknowledge the name of our Local Government Area and organisation references John Hepburn, one of the first European squatters to this region. The events that followed Hepburn's arrival disrupted the Dja Dja Wurrung way of life and the ecology of this region.

As such, Hepburn Shire Council acknowledges our leadership role and responsibility in promoting reconciliation in the community. Council issues the following statement to respectfully acknowledge the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander history within our Shire.

OUR STATEMENT OF ACKNOWLEDGEMENT FOR RECO

The landscapes of Hepburn Shire hold memories and stories from over thousands of generations of Dja Dja Wurrung and other Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. Oral stories, passed through these generations, describe the Creation that pays respect to Bunjil, who took the form of the wedge tailed eagle, and bestowed the lore of the land to Dja Dja Wurrung ancestors. Mindi, the giant serpent, travelled through tree tops and is known as the punisher of lore or tradition. Waa, the crow, is another important deity for the Dja Dja Wurrung.

Dja Dja Wurrung country extends north from the Great Dividing Range including Mount Franklin and the current towns of Creswick and Daylesford in the southeast, to Castlemaine, Maldon, Bendigo, Boort and Donald in the northwest, and Navarre Hill and Mount Avoca to the southwest. It covers the catchments of the Avoca, Loddon and Coliban Rivers.

Mount Franklin, or Lalgambook to the Dja Dja Wurrung peoples, was an iconic Aboriginal meeting place. Aboriginal corroborees have been held at Mount Franklin and elsewhere in Dja Dja Wurrung country for one thousand generations until very recent times. The Daylesford Museum has hundreds of artefacts collected from around the mountain.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples maintain a distinctive relationship with the Australian environment. For instance, Dja Dja Wurrung peoples intimately know the stories of country, the water, birds, plants, animals, the trees, the rocks, the wind, the fire and the mountains. Prior to European contact, complex land management and cultivation occurred across this region and the continent to support readily available, predictable food sources. These cultural practices are honoured with continued ceremonies on country.

The rich volcanic grasslands in the north of the Shire supported one of the highest densities of Aboriginal people in Australia. The grasslands were carefully managed with fire and other practices by Aboriginal peoples. When Major Thomas Mitchell arrived to the area in 1836, he commented that the grasslands resembled a 'park-like alternation of open forest' and there was 'no need for the pioneer to axe these noble trees: the land lay open for the herds and flocks, open even for the plough.' Mitchell wrongly declared the lands vacant and called the country Australia Felix – referring to fortune and abundance.

Formal British colonisation of Australia started in 1788 but other peoples from Asia and Europe had visited these shores for hundreds of years before. Contact in Dja Dja Wurrung country, including the Hepburn Shire region, began in 1837, soon after Major Mitchell surveyed the region. In 1838, John Hepburn's family squatted near present day Smeaton. The act of Hepburn 'taking up a station' and squatting on so called 'vacant lands of the Crown' is based on the now discredited legal fiction of terra nullius, that the land was 'empty' and 'there for the taking.'

NCILIATION

In early 1838, Hepburn was one of the first of many to follow in the 1836 footsteps of Mitchell, overlanding from Sydney to 'squat' with his thousands of sheep on the very grasslands created and maintained by Aboriginal people and Dja Dja Wurrung ancestors. The lands were a Dja Dja Wurrung cultivated landscape.

The pressure on Aboriginal people from the squatters on their lands in the then Colony of Port Philip led the British Government to set up a Protectorate System comprising four Protectorates in the Colony. In 1841, the Crown established the Loddon Aboriginal Protectorate near Baringhup.

In 1842, it moved to Franklinford where ancestors of the Dja Dja Wurrung and people from other nations in north-western Victoria were gathered and initially renamed the Loddon Tribe.

The Protectorate at Franklinford operated between 1841-1849. From the closure of the Franklinford Protectorate in 1849, some Aboriginal peoples remained near the site. In 1864, under the direction of the Central Board for the Protection of Aborigines, they were forcibly moved to Coranderrk, near present day Healesville. Today, many descendants of the Dja Dja Wurrung people can trace their heritage back to their ancestors at the Franklinford mission. In 1995, the Franklinford site was identified as being of very high historical significance to Aboriginal and European people, as one of the longest operating institutionalised Aboriginal establishments of the first half of the 19th century.

In 1851, news about the discovery of gold in Central Victoria triggered a massive influx of settlers into Dja Dja Wurrung country. Incredible wealth and fortunes were extracted from Dja Dja Wurrung country. Dja Dja Wurrung ancestors were excluded from reaping any benefit well into the 21st century. The gold rush settlers continued to displace Dja Dja Wurrung ancestors from their traditional lands.

Throughout Australia, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples have been displaced from their traditional lands since first contact including through successive Stolen Generations dating back to the Protectorate days. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community members within our Shire thus have links to traditional country around the continent.

Council acknowledges the fundamental disruption to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, economies and well-being since first contact. This disruption has been met with incredible resilience, resistance and struggle. Hepburn Shire Council recognises the resilience in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples across Australia whose descendants proudly survive today.

*Please refer to Appendix 1 for references and further reading

OUR BUSINESS

The Shire of Hepburn is a local government organisation located in the Central Highlands region of Victoria, about 110 kilometres north-west of Melbourne. The boundaries are formed by Central Goldfields and Mount Alexander Shires in the north, Macedon Ranges Shire in the east, Moorabool Shire in the south, and the City of Ballarat and Pyrenees Shire in the west. The Shire spans roughly 1470 square kilometres, reaches 70 kilometres east to west and 40 kilometres north to south. The Shire lies at the southern area of Dja Dja Wurrung country as recognised in the Recognition and Settlement Agreement 2013.

Our organisation employs approximately 180 full time, part time and casual staff. The organisation is not currently aware of any staff who identify as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people.

Hepburn Shire Council delivers local government services to the Hepburn Shire Local Government Area (LGA). A number of services we provide include libraries, pools, road maintenance and construction, community planning, walking and cycling paths, bridges, drainage, domestic animal management, community events, strategic land and natural environment planning, public health inspections, and many others. Council sets the overall direction for the municipality through long-term planning. We adopt a strategic view of the future we wish to achieve for our community and make plans and policies to achieve this. Council sets building and planning codes that engage cultural heritage elements. We monitor social and community issues and operate within the Local Government Act 1989 to deliver our services at the highest standard for all community members.

Our Council Plan 2017-2021 highlights Council's vision to provide excellent service delivery for our community. Council aspires for all Councillors, staff and community to refer to Hepburn Shire Council as "Our Council." Council will maintain, promote, protect and enhance the district's unique social, cultural, environmental and heritage characteristics. We will strive to gain maximum advantage for our community by protecting and enhancing our natural and built environment.

We acknowledge as part of our services, alongside the Dja Dja Wurrung, we hold joint responsibility of public lands, Dja Dja Wurrung country and other significant Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander sites. Council also works under state legislation that requires consultation with the Traditional Owners of the Shire in environmental and statutory planning, and natural resource management. This legislation includes the Traditional Owner Settlement Act 2010 and the Recognition and Settlement Agreement 2013 between the State of Victoria and the Dja Dja Wurrung Clans Aboriginal Corporation.

Council also adheres to the Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006 (the Act). Under the Act, our planning unit has a responsibility to ensure development is contained within areas of Aboriginal Cultural Heritage and sites of significance. Also, in any review of the Hepburn Planning Scheme, Council should consider the recognition, and where applicable, the protection of Aboriginal culturally sensitive areas.

PLANNING OUR RECONCILIATION ACTION PLAN

Council's RAP provides a direction for reconciliation activities in the Shire. Council seeks to build better relationships between the wider Australian community and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians for the benefit of all Australians.

Hepburn Shire seeks to develop more meaningful relationships with the Traditional Owners of the Shire, the Dja Dja Wurrung People. Council envisages working alongside the Dja Dja Wurrung Clans Aboriginal Corporation, who represent the interests and needs of the Dja Dja Wurrung people, to achieve the goals outlined in their Country Plan, "Dhelkunya Dja."

The 2017-2021 Council Plan specifically references to implement the actions that result from this Reflect RAP and future RAPs. The actions and vision for our RAP program will be delivered across the Shire as a whole. The RAP will be reviewed at the end of the 12-month term in order to prepare and plan for future RAPs.

Council committed to developing a RAP in 2016-2017. Council began to recognise Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures locally by holding Acknowledgement of Country proceedings at Ordinary Council meetings over 15 years ago. Council has also raised the Aboriginal flag at multiple Council facilities and hosted Welcome to Country ceremonies at a number of Council run events.

The RAP was developed by the Hepburn Shire Council internal RAP Working Group and the RAP Community Reference Group with assistance from the Dja Dja Wurrung Clans Aboriginal Corporation. Our RAP was developed in partnership with Atkinson Consulting Group.

The RAP Community Reference Group was appointed in September 2017 to represent the interests, concerns and ideas of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community members in the development of the RAP. Committee members identify as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander and also non-Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander. The members of this committee are Barry Golding, Anne Stewart, Rod Poxon, Nathan McGuire, Gary Lawrence, Kylie Mookhoek, Peter Sago and the Hepburn Shire Council Mayor.

Our RAP is championed by our RAP Working Group including the roles of Community Development Officer, General Manager Community and Corporate Services, Special Projects Manager, Manager Aged and Disability Services, Manager Economic and Community Development and Manager Strategic Project Delivery.



OUR PARTNERSHIPS AND CURRENT ACTIVITIES

Council hosts annual NAIDOC week celebrations and partners with our libraries and community groups to raise awareness of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and histories. We encourage and introduce our staff to NAIDOC week by promoting and delivering community events during NAIDOC week. In 2017, Council collaborated with the Daylesford Museum to celebrate and raise awareness for National Reconciliation Week (NRW).

Our Aged and Disability Services Unit have adopted a Diversity Plan that includes actions to support better outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander clients by providing accessible, culturally safe and respectable services. A large number of Aged and Disability services staff have also completed Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural awareness training.

In addition, a survey was released in 2017 within the organisation to understand our staff's level of knowledge regarding Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories, cultures and protocols. The results of the survey indicated our staff would like opportunities to learn more about the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander history in our Shire and support the organisation's leading role in promoting reconciliation. Ongoing evaluation of staff knowledge of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures is planned to continue as the RAP is implemented.

Our libraries participate in many reconciliation activities including special exhibitions of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander history books and local storytelling sessions with young people.

OUR RECONCILIATION ACTION PLAN

Reconciliation Action Plans (RAP) are about organisations from every sector turning good intentions into real actions and rising to the challenge of reconciling Australia. A RAP is a business plan that uses a holistic approach to create meaningful relationships, enhanced respect and promote opportunities with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians.

The RAP program includes four types of RAPs, each offering a different level of engagement and support. A Reflect RAP is for organisations starting out their reconciliation journey and assists in raising awareness and support for RAPs within and outside of an organisation. Hepburn Shire Council's Reflect RAP commits to completing the following actions over the next 12 months to ensure we are well positioned to implement effective and mutually beneficial initiatives as part of future RAPs.

Our future RAPs will build on the successes achieved through this Reflect RAP under the themes of Relationships, Respect and Opportunities. The actions outlined on page 9 fall within these key themes and are specific to our business, service delivery and sphere of influence.

ACTIONS AND DELIVERABLES

RELATIONSHIPS

ACTION	DELIVERABLE	TIMELINE	RESPONSIBILITY
1. Maintain a RAP Working Group to monitor and track the implementation of our RAP	Establish a Terms of Reference for the Working Group to outline how the RAP will be monitored and implemented.	July 2018	Community Development Officer
	Working Group oversees the endorsement and launch of the RAP		Community Development Officer
2. Develop and maintain external relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples	Identify and develop contact details and information of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, communities and organisations within our LGA to enable greater engagement between Council and its Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander residents, and to help build relationships that will contribute to development of future RAPs.	August 2018	Community Development Officer, RAP Community Reference Group
	Develop a resource list of other organisations or other like-minded organisations to assist with our reconciliation activities.	August 2018	Community Development Officer, RAP Community Reference Group
3. Participate in and celebrate National Reconciliation Week (NRW)	<p>Organise event(s) to recognise and celebrate NRW.</p> <p>RAP Working Group members to participate in regional reconciliation forums.</p> <p>Support an external NRW event.</p> <p>Register all Council's NRW events on Reconciliation Australia's website to capture support and participation.</p> <p>RAP Working Group attends an external NRW event.</p> <p>Encourage our staff to attend a NRW event.</p> <p>Circulate Reconciliation Australia's NRW resources and reconciliation materials to our staff and community.</p>	27 May – 3 June 2019	Community Development Officer, RAP Community Reference Group



ACTION	DELIVERABLE	TIMELINE	RESPONSIBILITY
4. Raise internal staff awareness of our RAP	Develop and implement activities to raise awareness amongst all staff across the organisation about our RAP commitments including: -Hosting all staff meetings at Mt Franklin and liaise with Dja Dja Wurrung Clans Aboriginal Corporation(DDWCAC) on cultural presentation and tour of site.	September 2018	Community Development Officer, Manager Economic and Community Development
	Develop and implement actions to engage and inform key internal stakeholders of their responsibilities within the RAP such as: -Presentation to all areas of Council to ensure employees have an understanding of RAP commitments.	August 2018	
	Publish reconciliation activities in CEO updates as they occur.	June 2019	
5. Promote and raise external awareness of our RAP	Communicate RAP achievements through print and online media.	July 2019	Communications Officer
	Hold a RAP launch event in partnership with community groups to deliver information on our RAP.	July 2018	Community Development Officer
6. Identify and acknowledge overlapping actions and goals between Council Plan and DDWCAC's Country Plan	Develop a list of overlapping goals and potential collaborative projects with the DDWCAC to inform future RAPs and budget submissions.	March 2019	Community Partnerships Coordinator DDWCAC CEO, General Manager Corporate and Community Services
	Brief Councillors on the potential collaborative projects.	April 2019	Community Partnerships Coordinator General Manager Corporate and Community Services
7. Engage with DDWCAC to investigate conaming sites and increased Traditional Owner acknowledgement across the Shire	Liaise with DDWCAC to develop a list of potential sites for co-naming and locations to increase signage acknowledging the Traditional Owners of the Shire.	November 2018	Major Projects Manager, Dja Dja Wurrung CEO
	Agree on processes for new projects and buildings to incorporate local Aboriginal words and artworks.		



ACTIONS AND DELIVERABLES

RESPECT

ACTION	DELIVERABLE	TIMELINE	RESPONSIBILITY
8. Deliver cultural learning and development opportunities within Council	Develop a plan for increasing awareness of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, histories and achievements within Council including: - Conducting a review of cultural awareness training needs and develop training program.	October 2018	Community Development Officer, People and Performance Officer
	Develop and implement staff online or face to face Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural awareness training program with initial delivery to Leadership Team.	December 2018	Manager People and Performance, Community Development Officer
	Review and update Council's staff induction processes to include key elements of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural awareness training program.	January 2018	Manager People and Performance, Community Development Officer
	Undertake survey to measure our staff's level of knowledge and understanding of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, histories and achievements after implementation of cultural awareness training.	June 2019	Community Development Officer, People and Performance Officer
	Raise awareness and share information amongst our staff of the meaning of NAIDOC week which includes information about the local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and communities.	July 2018, July 2019	Community Development Officer, Events Officer, RAP Community Reference Group
9. Continue to participate in, celebrate and develop NAIDOC week activities	RAP Working Group members participate in an external NAIDOC week event.	July 2018, July 2019	Community Development Officer
	Introduce our staff to NAIDOC Week by promoting community events in our local area.	July 2018, July 2019	Community Development Officer



ACTION	DELIVERABLE	TIMELINE	RESPONSIBILITY
10. Raise internal understanding of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural protocols	Develop and implement a plan to raise awareness and understanding of the meaning and significance behind Acknowledgement of Country and Welcome to Country protocols.	September 2018	Community Development Officer, Manager Strategic Project Delivery
	Scope and develop a list of local Traditional Owners of the lands and waters within our organisation's sphere of influence.	September 2018	Community Development Officer, Manager Development and Community Safety
	Formalise processes for internal and external meetings and events for Acknowledgement of Country and Welcome to Country protocols (including any local cultural protocols).	August 2018	Community Development Officer
	Install signs to acknowledge Traditional Owners upon entering the Shire and at significant locations such as Mount Franklin.	March 2019	Manager Strategic Project Delivery
11. Celebrate/ recognise Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander dates of significance	Investigate Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander significant dates and celebrations in which Council can participate in partnership with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community and local community groups.	November 2018	Community Development Officer



ACTIONS AND DELIVERABLES

OPPORTUNITIES

ACTION	DELIVERABLE	TIMELINE	RESPONSIBILITY
12. Promote Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment	Capture baseline data on current Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff to inform future employment and development opportunities.	September 2018	Manager People and Performance, People and Performance Officer
	Develop a business case for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment within Council.	July 2019	
	Include in all employment advertising a statement encouraging Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to apply.	August 2018	
13. Promote inclusion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander suppliers	Develop a business case for procurement from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander owned businesses.	November 2018	Community Development Officer, Economic Development Officer
	Develop an understanding of the mutual benefits of procurement from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander owned businesses by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Identifying and documenting types of purchases where there are mutual benefits of procurement from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander owned businesses. 	November 2018	Manager Finance and Information Technology, Manager Strategic Project Delivery, Economic Development Officer
	Liaise with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander businesses such as Dja Dja Wurrung Enterprises Pty Ltd to understand their capacity to deliver relevant services to Council.		Manager Strategic Project Delivery, Economic Development Officer
	Notify Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander businesses on relevant upcoming procurement opportunities.		Manager Strategic Project Delivery, Economic Development Officer
	Add Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander evaluation criteria in next Procurement Policy Review.		Manager Finance and Information Technology



ACTION	DELIVERABLE	TIMELINE	RESPONSIBILITY
14. Provide incentives for community groups to engage with reconciliation within the Shire	Provide a community grants category for activities or resources that support reconciliation in the Shire.	July 2018	Community Services Project Support Officer
15. Investigate opportunities to promote community dialogue on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories in our Shire.	Hold community forums and information sharing sessions on Australia wide and Shire specific historic topics such as the 26 January. Investigate opportunities to incorporate Dja Dja Wurrung elements into Council's civic events.	October 2018	RAP Community Reference Group, Community Development Officer



APPENDIX 1:

BIBLIOGRAPHY AND FURTHER READING LIST

The following books, articles and historical documents were referenced throughout our RAP document. We encourage anyone to find these materials, many of which are available at the Daylesford Museum, Hepburn Libraries and the Dja Dja Wurrung Clans Aboriginal Corporation.

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