

INNOVATE:

RECONCILIATION ACTION PLAN
JAN 2025 - JAN 2027



Hepburn
SHIRE COUNCIL


RECONCILIATION
ACTION PLAN
INNOVATE



Acknowledgement of Country

Hepburn Shire Council acknowledge the Dja Dja Wurrung as the Traditional Owners of the lands and waters on which we live and work.

On these lands, Djaara have performed age-old ceremonies of celebration, initiation and renewal.

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

We also acknowledge the neighbouring Traditional Owners, the Wurrundjeri to our Southeast and the Wadawurrung to our Southwest and pay our respect to all Aboriginal peoples, their culture, and lore.

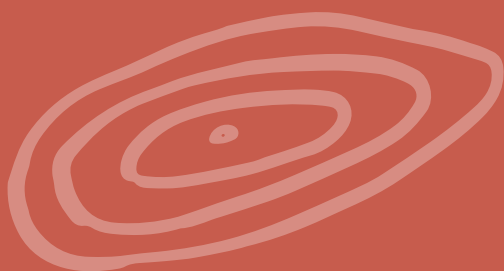
We acknowledge their living culture and the unique story they play in the life of this region of which the Hepburn region resides and operates within.

: About the artwork and artists

This piece is the collaboration of Aboriginal visual artists Megan Van Den Berg (Dja Dja Wurrung, Yorta Yorta, Taungurung and Boon Wurrung) and Emma Bamblett (Wemba Wemba, Gunditjmara, Ngadjonji and Taungurung).

"On Dja Dja Wurrung country, this piece celebrates the creation story featuring Bunjil and acknowledges our ancestral stories, and connection to the land and the deep springs. The piece is also a celebration of the future of Dja Dja Wurrung descendants who bring forward this strong and vibrant culture"

- Megan Van Den Berg and Emma Bamblett



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This documents contains photos and or imagery that may include deceased Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander members. Reader discretion is advised.



: Statement from CEO of Reconciliation Australia



First Innovate RAP

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Karen Mundine
Chief Executive Officer
Reconciliation Australia

: Message from the Mayor



Hepburn Shire is steadfastly committed to the Reconciliation journey. We welcome the opportunity to implement the next stage of that pivotal journey by developing the 'INNOVATE' Reconciliation Action Plan. This plan will provide the framework for us to formalise recognition of local Indigenous heritage. Our work in this area through our previous REFLECT RAP is about unity and respect between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and all of our community to encourage us to walk forward together.

In my role as Mayor, I am honoured to act as Chair of the Reconciliation Advisory Committee and to work with the committee to drive meaningful projects in partnership with the community and landscape of Hepburn Shire.

Our Council is committed to advance reconciliation and strengthen our partnership with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and Traditional Owners, the Djaara peoples. We must continue to constructively work to encourage unity and respect between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and our non-Indigenous community.

It is my strong desire that Council's enduring commitment is reflected through the INNOVATE Reconciliation Action Plan and its subsequent achievements.

A handwritten signature in black ink, which appears to read 'Don Henderson'.

Cr Don Henderson
Mayor

: Message from the CEO



Hepburn Shire Council is proud to present its second Reconciliation Action Plan INNOVATE to continue the important work achieved in the Reconciliation Action Plan REFLECT. This new plan innovates further relationship building through deliberate actions to improve acknowledgement and recognition of the Traditional Owners the Dja Dja Wurrung People.

Council promotes an atmosphere of inclusivity, equality, respectful and positive relationships throughout the Shire. Our ongoing connection with Djaara peoples aims to build these principles and walk forward together with all our community in a journey of reconciliation.

Our Reconciliation work has led to recognition in the form of several awards, the Maggolee Award in 2023 for the Manna Gums Frontier War Memorial as an Avenue of Honour, and our collaboration with Uncle Rick Nelson and Daylesford Museum showcasing a set of portraits of Dja Dja Wurrung people photographed in 1866 at the Coranderrk Aboriginal Station, which won the Australian Museums and Galleries Award in 2023 in the First Peoples Exhibition category.

I look forward to the implementation of this plan and to continue working with Traditional Owners.

Bradley Thomas
CEO

: Our vision for Reconciliation

Hepburn Shire Council's vision for reconciliation is a Shire where Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, cultures, and spirituality are valued, respected, and celebrated.

Our relationships with Traditional Owners are built on respect, understanding and acknowledgement of Truth-telling in our shared history, and through our Innovate Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) we will build on our commitment to reconciliation, demonstrated in our previous REFLECT RAP, to ensure all members of the Hepburn Shire community are united by respect.

We aim for all community members to be provided the same, highest quality services from our organisation and for all staff, aspiring towards a just equitable and reconciled Australia.

► Larni Barramul Yaluk.



: Understanding Djandak-Dja Dja Wurrung Country

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 resilience, resistance, and struggle. Hepburn Shire Council recognises the resilience in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples across Australia whose descendants proudly survive today.

Djandak, Dja Dja Wurrung Country, is an extensive landscape that extends north from the Great Dividing Range including Lalgambuk (Mount Franklin) and the current towns of Creswick and Daylesford in the southeast, to Castlemaine, Maldon, Bendigo, Boort in the north, Donald in the northwest, and Navarre Hill and Mount Avoca in the southwest.

It covers the catchments of the Avoca, Loddon and Coliban Rivers. For Djaara peoples, the Country or land is known as 'Djandak' and is more than just a landscape; it is a living entity that holds the stories of creation, histories, memories, and cultural significance going back three thousand generations. It cannot be erased.

Hepburn Shire acknowledges that the majority of lands within the footprint of the Hepburn Shire are in the unceded lands of Dja Dja Wurrung Nation, two areas deserve to be acknowledged and managed for future generations as unique and important cultural landscapes by virtue of evidence on country and in the historical record.

1. Gurutjanga/Kooroocheang Cultural Landscape, comprising a unique and significant cluster of oven mound sites surrounding an important ceremonial site, all on private land.
2. Lalgambuk/Mt Franklin Cultural Landscape, comprising a concentration of unique and significant pre and post contact sites on both public and private land within the footprint of the former Mt Franklin Aboriginal Protectorate (1841-1849).

Given the unique nature and importance of these landscapes Hepburn Shire Council is committed to work collaboratively with Dja Dja Wurrung peoples to properly record, acknowledge, protect and interpret these significant cultural sites, recognising their importance in the new Innovate RAP.

: About Hepburn Shire Council

Hepburn Shire Council exists in a culturally rich landscape that extends from the Great Dividing Range including Lalgambuk (Mt Franklin) and the towns of Trentham and Daylesford in the southeast, and Creswick and Clunes to the west, and is one of 12 regional Councils on Dja Dja Wurrung Country as recognised in the Recognition and Settlement Agreement 2013.

▼ The opening ceremony of the Mechanics Trentham - Dja Dja Wurrung dancers.

The Shire spans roughly 1470 square kilometers, reaches 70 kilometers east to west and 40 kilometers north to south. Hepburn Shire acknowledges the neighbouring Traditional Owners, the Wurrundjeri to our southeast and the Wadawurrung to our southwest.

Hepburn Shire Council is committed to being a role model for our community, leading a culture demonstrating inclusivity, equality, respect, and positive relationships across our Shire.



Local Government is accountable to State Government through the Minister for Local Government and is the closest tier of government to the community. We provide a number of services including 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 more.

Council sets the overall direction for the municipality through integrated 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 2020 to deliver our services at the highest standard for all community members.

Our organisation employs approximately 210 staff or 194 FTE. The organisation is not currently aware of any staff who have identified as being an Aboriginal and/Torres Strait Islander. This invitation is optional and extended to all employees and Council will work to strengthen the RAP's implementation to understand this information in a culturally safe way.

As a local government, Hepburn Shire Council plays a pivotal role in fostering reconciliation and supporting the self-determination of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. Our sphere of influence begins with our staff and our community, businesses and organisations that are part of our community or whom we do business with and extends to, those who are, visitors to our Shire.

We are a leader for our community and our approach to reconciliation acts as a guide to others across our Shire.

- Our Council has an opportunity to leverage our platform for education and awareness, promoting cultural awareness and understanding within our community, highlighting the rich histories, cultures, and contributions of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples through programs, events, and educational initiatives.
- Our Council will create culturally safe spaces for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander voices by actively involving Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities in our decision-making processes, we support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander rights to self-determination and will ensure Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander voices and perspectives shape our policies and initiatives.
- Our Council will champion and advocate for change supporting initiatives and policies that advance reconciliation and equity for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.
- Our Council understands our role as a leader in the community, to ensure cultural safety and inclusivity. We are committed to creating a culturally safe environment in our workplaces, through interactions with our staff, the design and delivery of our services and programs, and our leadership in the community.

We have a high level of influence across our community and are pivotal in advancing reconciliation across Hepburn Shire Council.

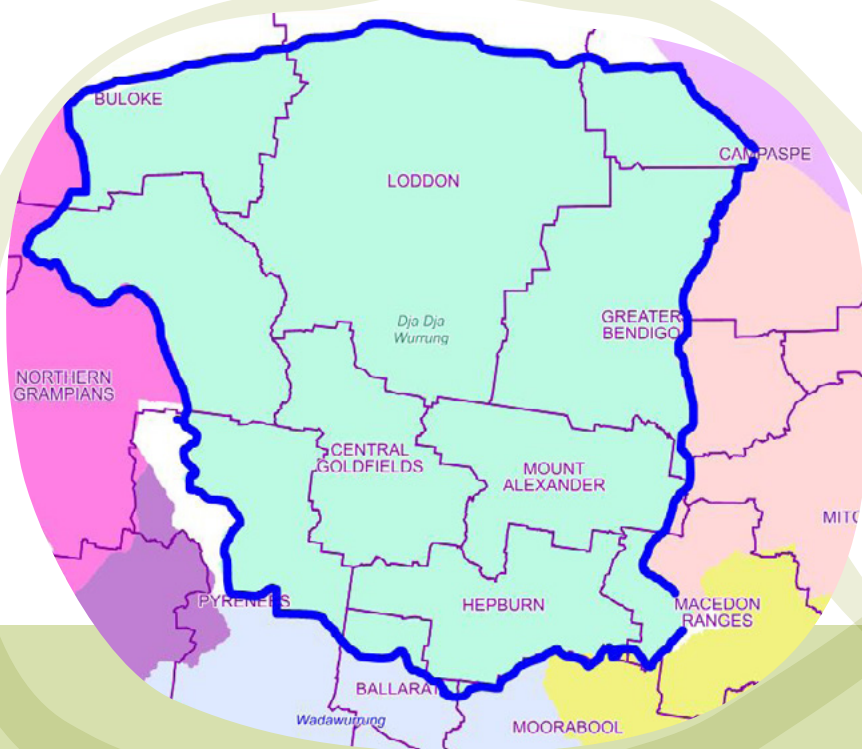
Hepburn Shire Council operates multiple office locations including:

- 1 Council Chambers –
24 Vincent Street, Daylesford.
- 2 Administration Office –
Cnr Duke and Albert Street, Daylesford.
- 3 Administration Office and Visitor Information
Centre – 98 Vincent Street, Daylesford.
- 4 Daylesford Library –
Cnr Bridport and Albert Street, Daylesford.
- 5 Creswick Hub – 68 Albert Street, Creswick.
- 6 Clunes Hub (The Warehouse) –
36 Fraser Street, Clunes.
- 7 Trentham Hub (Mechanics Trentham) –
66 High Street, Trentham.

Djaara Country and Local Government Boundaries

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 within Shire for 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.

The 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.



◀ Dja Dja Wurrung boundaries across Local Government Areas (LGA) areas.

Census Snapshot – Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Community in Hepburn

Based on the ABS Census 2021. Council recognises that the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population is historically under-counted in Census and that the actual population in Hepburn is likely to be higher.

Population	16,604
Female	50.9%
Male	49.1%
Median age	52
Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander Peoples	180
Female	48.6%
Male	51.4%
Median Age	25
Non-Indigenous	91.8%
Indigenous status not stated	7.1%
Number of households	6,845
Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander Households	95
Average people per household	2.8
Average people per household	2.2



▲ Sustainable Hepburn Day Welcome to Country ceremony. Alvine Darcy Briggs and Uncle Rick Nelson

Source: [2021 Hepburn, Census All persons QuickStats](#)
[Australian Bureau of Statistics \(abs.gov.au\)](#)

: Our Reconciliation Action Plan

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

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

"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 reconcile together with the whole Hepburn Shire community".



▲ Sustainable Hepburn Day Welcome to Country smoking ceremony

Photo: Kathy Mexted

'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.

The four RAP types – Reflect, Innovate, Stretch, and Elevate, provide a framework enabling organisations to continually develop their reconciliation journey.

Hepburn Shire Council has been on its reconciliation journey for some time and having worked through implementation of our REFLECT RAP 2018, have now developed our Innovate RAP.

Our Innovate RAP is a public and open commitment to our continuous work on reconciliation and is in accordance with the requirements of Reconciliation Australia. Our Innovate RAP outlines Hepburn's vision for reconciliation and focuses on developing and strengthening relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

Reconciliation Australia's RAP framework provides organisations with a structured approach to advance reconciliation. Each type of RAP is designed to suit an organisation at different stages in their reconciliation journey.

▼ Aunty Marilyn Nicholls
Traditional Weaver



: Our Innovate RAP engagement and development process

We are developing an Innovate Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP), because our Council seeks to ensure reconciliation is at the core of our organisation and a foundation to all our services. Our all-Council approach to developing our RAP embeds reconciliation within our core business and our commitment is demonstrated through our previous REFLECT RAP which gave us the opportunity to gain a deeper understanding of the Dja Dja Wurrung peoples, culture, history, and wellbeing.

Our learnings have taught us Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives, to connect to Country, to engage respectfully and genuinely, to empower and support the right to self-determination. Through our renaming of "Larni Barramul Yaluk" (home of the emu creek), we were challenged with the long process to engage the community in the truth telling of history. This project placed Dja Dja Wurrung language in the landscape and required the co-operation of neighbouring Mt Alexander Shire and other government bodies. We are developing our Innovate RAP to continue this work and grow from our experience in future projects.



► Aunty Marilyn Nicholls
Traditional Weaver
Fishtraps and glasswork

Cultural Immersion Tour to deepen our understanding.

In late 2023, Hepburn's Executive Leadership Team and the members of the RAP Working Group participated in a Cultural Immersion Day hosted by DJAARA. The tour visited significant cultural sites and provided insights into the local Indigenous cultural history and a deeper understanding of the landscape. The session aimed to support the working group to better understand Dja Dja Wurrung Country, known as Djandak, the Dja Dja Wurrung people's history, and the role of the group in supporting self-determination of Djaara people through the INNOVATE Reconciliation Action Plan.

▼ Hepburn Shire Council
Internal RAP Working Group
at the Franklinford Aboriginal
protectorate during a Cultural
Immersion Day.



▲ Environmental
works officer
Lauren Linke



We acknowledge that the Innovate RAP needs to embed into our core business and all members of our executive team are committed to reconciliation and have been actively involved in the development of our Innovate RAP.

Internal RAP Working Group

- Reconciliation Officer
- Director Performance and Transformation
- Director Infrastructure and Delivery
- Coordinator Sustainability and Climate Resilience
- Project Manager Djuwang Baring Creswick Trails)
- Coordinator Economic Development & Visitor Economy
- Environmental Works Officer
- Coordinator Healthy Communities
- Coordinator Major Projects and Policy
- Coordinator Customer Experience and Libraries
- Team Leader Arboriculture and Open Spaces
- Coordinator Sport and Active Recreation
- Emergency Management Officer

Our Council are not aware of any staff who identify as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples; accordingly, our internal RAP Working Group has been supported by the participation of First Nations advisors who are part of our External Reconciliation Advisory Committee.

External Reconciliation Advisory Committee

In addition to our internal RAP Working Group, our Council has a strong history supporting an external Reconciliation Advisory Committee. Currently this committee has two First Nations advisors appointed out of ten committee members and meets four times per year. The committee operate under delegation of our Councils Advisory Committees, and they provide guidance, feedback, and information to support our Council to progress reconciliation in the community. The Internal committee provides feedback on Council's reconciliation activities by embedding reconciliation perspectives in policies, plans and activities. These meetings are recorded in minutes which are circulated to the committee and reported through our Council meetings.

The members of the committee include:

- Current Mayor of Hepburn Shire Council
- Ms Erica Higgins - First Nations representative
- Mr Dale Mc Donald - First Nations representative
- Mr Gary Lawrence - Daylesford Museum Curator
- Honorary Professor Barry Golding AM, Federation University
- Ms Nola Orr - Arts practitioner/Cultural materials conservator
- Mr Graig Barrett - Artist
- Mr Noah Tyler - Archaeologist/heritage adviser
- Ms Andrea Cody- Assistant co-ordinator Daylesford Community Childcare

Our Innovate RAP Engagement and Development Process

Our first REFLECT RAP gave us the opportunity to gain a deeper understanding of the Dja Dja Wurrung Peoples culture, history, and wellbeing in our Shire. Within the REFLECT RAP we explored our sphere of influence focusing on identifying opportunities to recognise the unique landscape in our Shire in traditional language. We engaged in significant and large projects such as the renaming of a creek and the establish the Manna Gums Frontier War Memorial Avenue.

To successfully implement these projects, we were challenged by limited time, resources, and lengthy consultation processes. Partnerships were key to the success of these projects, at the centre of which consultation with the Traditional Owners guided the cultural content. On reflection, the projects required the majority of our resources and therefore important reconciliation work within the Council was delayed. We are looking to the Innovate RAP to embed reconciliation further within our organisation, whilst continuing to scope and plan further significant projects.

Our REFLECT RAP guided us through the early stages of our reconciliation journey. We focused on working to develop relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, communities, and organisations, increasing respect and identifying opportunities.



▲ CEO Hepburn Shire Council Bradley Thomas and CEO DJAARA Rodney Carter at the renaming ceremony of Larni Barramal Yaluk 18 July 2023

Photo by Dan Hough.

Delivering our REFLECT RAP actions required a collaborative approach from our organisation, gaining insight from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples who are part of our communities and with DJAARA.

Our REFLECT RAP engaged in the Truth-telling of the colonisation of Hepburn, and we have continued this path in our new Innovate RAP to implement actions that further deepen our understanding and respect for history. Our participation and support of National Reconciliation Week and NAIDOC Week events contributed in our work to increase awareness and understanding of reconciliation and the deep cultures and histories of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. We have introduced Welcome to Country and Acknowledgement of Country practices at formal meetings and events, and on Council platforms and materials.

Hepburn Shire Council Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) Innovate builds on our clear direction of advancing reconciliation established through our previous REFLECT RAP in which we committed to collaboration with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people through projects that celebrate Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, local history, cultural heritage, and art.

A whole-of-council approach was taken in the development of the Innovate RAP, with the actions and deliverables being informed by consultation with Traditional Owners, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community members, community stakeholders, and Council staff. This maps a pathway towards achieving reconciliation.

Whilst building on our previous REFLECT RAP, the new actions and strategies aim to further embed reconciliation within our organisation and externally with our partners.

Our Innovate RAP details the actions necessary to embed a process of change and represents the cornerstone to supporting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander self-determination.

The strategies include:

- In consultation with Dja Dja Wurrung, promotion and enhancement of the Acknowledgement of Country, recognition, and respect for Traditional Owner culture and history with signage, art installations and place naming using Aboriginal language.
- Ensuring our services, workplaces and events are appropriate and culturally safe.
- Strengthening partnerships with the registered Aboriginal Party DJAARA, to implement local government commitments under the 2013 Dja Dja Wurrung Recognition and Settlement Agreement.
- Continued facilitation of Recognition and Settlement Agreement (RSA), respect, trust, and positive relationships between Aboriginal and Non-Indigenous community members including encouraging community participation in cultural learning through regular activities that address racism and promote reconciliation.

Our RAP Consultation Partners

- Dja Dja Wurrung peoples through DJAARA
- Reconciliation Advisory Committee (External)
- RAP Working Group (Internal)

Hepburn Shire Council extends its thanks and gratitude to the many people who have invested their passion, vision, and time in the development of this RAP.

: Our reconciliation journey so far

Our REFLECT RAP has significantly raised the awareness and importance of topics of importance to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples within Councils sphere of influence. We will continue to build on these learnings, deepening our understanding of histories, connections, stories and walk together with DJAARA to heal country through our Innovate RAP.

The following is an outline of our activities to date in our reconciliation journey.

Commitment to Reconciliation

Hepburn Shire Council formally supported the key principles of the Uluru Statement of the Heart and the Voice to Parliament in the 2023 Referendum. Council respectfully

acknowledges the outcome of the referendum whilst remaining unanimously resolved to reaffirm our unwavering commitment to reconciliation.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Representation:

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community members are part of our Reconciliation Advisory Committee that helps guide the Council in our reconciliation journey.

Cultural Awareness Training

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural awareness training is offered to the community, and is provided to all staff. Ongoing evaluation of staff knowledge of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures continue as is embedded in the Innovate RAP.

National Reconciliation Week and NAIDOC Week

Council hosts annual NAIDOC and National Reconciliation Week celebrations in partnership with our libraries and community groups to raise awareness of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and histories.

Cultural Value Assessment

Our Council has recently completed a Cultural Values assessment of the Shire in partnership with DJAARA, acknowledging cultural knowledge to inform and shape Future Hepburn planning.

Promotion of Reconciliation in our Libraries and Museums

Our libraries participate in many reconciliation activities including special exhibitions of contemporary Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander history books and older historical books to highlight the different lenses of how history is told, and local storytelling sessions with young people. Our museums are updating displays of important artifacts and informative text with the view to acknowledging the living culture today with important historical exhibitions. This is ongoing and evolving in consultation with the Dja Dja Wurrung peoples.

The Renaming Larni Barramal Yaluk and Co-Naming of Lalgambuk

The creek originally formed the boundary of the Franklinford Aboriginal mission station when it was in use up to 1867 and at the time was known as 'Black Protectorates Creek'. The name Jim Crow was given to the site in 1890.

The term "Jim Crow" came from a song in a minstrel show in the 1830s in the United States. A performer wore blackface, sang, and danced a routine making fun of a black person, called "Jim Crow." Known widely as a racist and derogatory term, Jim Crow refers to racial segregation laws that were active in the United States. This legislation legalised white-only schools, restaurants, bathrooms and drinking fountains. The term became an insult that was commonly used against black people.

► Around 50 people attended a special ceremony to celebrate the renaming of Jim Crow Creek to Larni Barramal Yaluk.

In April 2022, Council resolved to request Geographic Names Victoria to rename the Jim Crow Creek, which flows between Newstead and Hepburn to Larni Barramal Yaluk. Council worked closely with the community and project partners Mount Alexander Shire Council, North Central Catchment Management Authority and DJAARA to campaign for the renaming of the creek over many years.

The proposed name change reinstated Dja Dja Wurrung language into the landscape and recognised Aboriginal heritage reconciling the past name. In May 2023, Geographical Names Victoria gazetted the renaming of to 'Larni Barramal Yaluk' meaning Home (or habitat) or the Emu Creek. Another translation given is 'the resting place of the Emu'. The crater at Mt Franklin/Lalgambuk had this name because the crater resembles the Emu nest. The country surrounding this was also referred to as Larni Barramal because the springs and swamps there provided water for the emu. The creek would also provide water, therefore, renaming the creek Larni Barramal Yaluk after this area was agreed by the Traditional Owners.





▲ NAIDOC week 2024 Cultural landscape walk at Lalgambuk.



► Central Springs opening ceremony.

The Manna Gums Frontier War Memorial

In July 2021, Council, in partnership with DJAARA, opened the first Avenue of Honour to Acknowledge Aboriginal lives lost in defending their traditional lands during early contact and 'settlement'. The Memorial Avenue is on the Daylesford-Malmsbury Road near Coomoora. This project responded to the NAIDOC theme 'Heal Country' and is the first of its kind in our country. Rodney Carter, DJAARA CEO, said "The Frontier Wars Memorial Avenue affords a greater recognition to our fallen ancestors and helps us all heal". This project was one of the winners of the inaugural Maggolee Award 2023.

Reconciliation Videos

Council has produced several videos about Truth-telling and reconciling our shared history. Three videos called 'Peaks, Rivers and Wetlands' take viewers on a journey across the landscape with Djaara Elder Uncle Rick Nelson and Professor Barry Golding to environments and events from early contact period that marked the beginning of unimaginable loss and trauma for Dja Dja Wurrung People.

These videos look at Mount Greenock, Merin Merin, and The Loddon River at Neereman. This project was an initiative of the Reconciliation Action Plan Advisory Committee and was highly commended in the 2021 HART (Helping Achieve Reconciliation Together) Awards in the Local Government category.



The Coranderrk Portraits

Daylesford & District Historical Society, in partnership with DJAARA Elder Uncle Rick Nelson and Council, hosted an exhibition to showcase a set of portraits of Dja Dja Wurrung people photographed in 1866 at the Coranderrk Aboriginal Station. This was a rare opportunity to reflect on the journey these First Nations people endured; from being forced off their land and waterways, left in government protectorates until they were closed, and then

in 1864 taken to Coranderrk and off Country. The photographs are generously made available by Uncle Rick Nelson and won the Australian Museums and Galleries Award in 2023 in the First Peoples Exhibition category. A narrated short film titled 'We're getting our voice back' was produced with Uncle Rick Nelson and Professor Barry Golding AM. This film takes a journey of Truth-telling, moving across the landscapes at sites Neereman, and Lalgambook (Mt Franklin) and Coranderrk.



Djuwang Baring

Hepburn Shire Council and DJAARA, the Dja Dja Wurrung Clans Aboriginal Corporation, collaborated on the naming of the Creswick Trails Project, a network of mountain bike trails in Creswick. The trail will be known as Djuwang Baring, meaning long track in Dja Dja Wurrung language.

Mayor, Cr Brian Hood, commented "the trails wind their way through Dja Dja Wurrung Country passing through State Forest, Regional Park and HVP Plantation lands." There has been extensive consultation with DJAARA during the development and activation of this project, bringing back language to Country.

Dja Dja Wurrung Group CEO Rodney Carter said DJAARA was very pleased to collaborate with Hepburn Shire Council on the project, which would bring a significant boost to the region.

"Dja Dja Wurrung People have walked this Country for many thousands of years, and we are proud to share our Country and our Culture with all in the community. The project recognises Dja Dja Wurrung Peoples as the Traditional Owners through the naming of the facility, and through the use of Dja Dja Wurrung language on many of the individual trail segments,"

DJAARA CEO Rodney Carter



◀ Xanthia Chatham on the trails at Djuwang Baring



Central Springs at Hepburn

The design was informed by cultural information gathered at a Wartaka and interpreted by the Dja Dja Wurrung artist Timani Nicholls.

Djandak, Hepburn Shire Council, landscape architect Justine Image, and contractor Natureform worked together to bring Timani's artwork to life in a format that was suitable for the outdoor conditions.

Also informed by the Wartaka, was the setup of the mineral springs pump, designed to allow spilt mineral water to flow overland and into Wombat Creek. This was complimented by interpretive signage about the artwork and the importance of water for the Djaara people. Another collaboration was the indigenous inspired shelter, delivered by Djandak as part of the works.

In a further development Djandak are going to construct a yarning circle as a part of the Balak Kalik Many program, to compliment the work already done.

Timani Nicholls-Moore – Djaara Woman

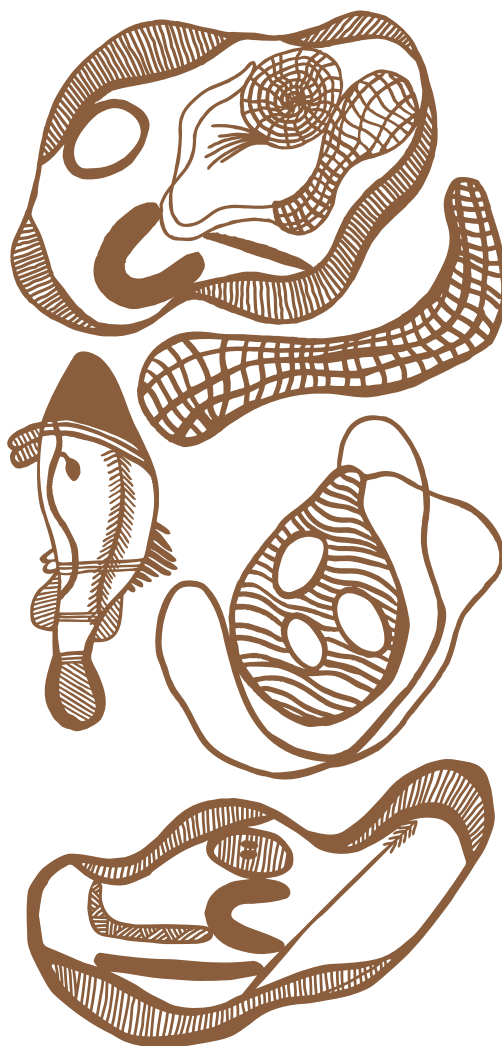
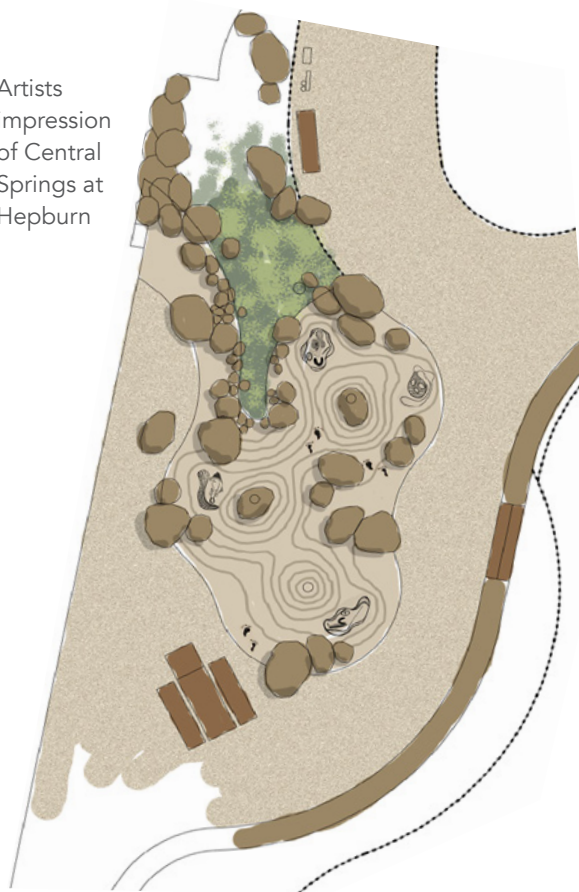
"I did the artwork so people would be more informed about what did happen along the water. I wanted to bring that spirit back here.

This is what would have been happening along the water. Women would be gathering and weaving. The fish trap was another thing we used to collect food. We collected eggs too but only at the right time and when there was enough.

I wanted to capture that this is a special place for everyone. It's a chain reaction - without water there's no food, no plants, no life, there's nothing.

The wavy line around the mineral spring pumps shows that nothing is ever wasted when we care for Country. Gatjin(water)spilled on the ground is not waste water, it returns to Djandak and takes its place in the natural cycle."

► Artists impression of Central Springs at Hepburn



▲ Timani Nicholls-Moore – Djaara Woman

Hepburn Shire Council's Action Areas



: RELATIONSHIPS

Hepburn Shire Council understands that relationships are key to the strengthening of reconciliation within our organisation. Good relationships enable people to connect and share good governance and self-determination, open communication, engagement and strengthening of partnerships. Council seeks to build better relationships with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community of Hepburn.

Action	Alignment to Dhelkunya Dja Country Plan	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
1: Establish and maintain mutually beneficial relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and organisations	Goal 1 Djaara	1.1 Meet with local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and organisations to develop guiding principles for future engagement.	June 2025	Director Community and Corporate
	Goal 2 Cultural Practices and Customs	1.2 Develop and implement an engagement plan to work with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and organisations.	June 2025	Director Community and Corporate
		1.3 Collaborate with RAP organisations in the RAP network and/or other like-minded organisations that we could approach to collaborate with on our reconciliation journey.	Dec 2026	Reconciliation Officer
2: Build relationships through celebration of National Reconciliation Week (NRW)	Goal 2 Cultural Practices and Customs	2.1 Circulate Reconciliation Australia's NRW resources and reconciliation material to our staff.	May 2025 – May 2026	Reconciliation Officer
	Goal 3 Cultural Heritage	2.2 RAP Working Group members to participate in an external event that recognises and celebrates NRW.	27 May – 3 June 2025-26	Reconciliation Officer
		2.3 Encourage and support staff and senior leaders to participate in at least one external event to recognise and celebrate NRW.	27 May – 3 June 2025-26	Reconciliation Officer; Events Officer
		2.4 Organise at least one NRW event each year.	27 May – 3 June 2025-26	Reconciliation Officer; Events Officer
		2.5 Register all Hepburn Shire Council NRW events on Reconciliation Australia's NRW website.	27 May – 3 June 2025-26	Reconciliation Officer; Events Officer
		2.6 Promote local and NRW events in our region via our social media to increase awareness of what is happening and how to get involved.	27 May – 3 June 2025-26	Reconciliation Officer

Action	Alignment to Dhelkunya Dja Country Plan	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
3: Promote reconciliation through our sphere of influence	Goal 2 Cultural Practices and Customs	3.1 Develop and implement a staff engagement strategy to raise awareness of reconciliation across our workforce.	Aug 2025	Reconciliation Officer
		3.2 Communicate our commitment to reconciliation publicly.	Feb 2025	Reconciliation Officer
	Goal 3 Cultural Heritage	3.3 Explore opportunities to positively influence our external stakeholders to drive reconciliation outcomes	Dec 2026	Reconciliation Officer
	Goal 5 Rivers and Waterways	3.4 Increase organisational and community awareness of significant dates around Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, histories and achievements.	Jan 25 – Jan 27	Reconciliation Officer
	Goal 4 Bush Tucker and Medicine			
4: Promote positive race relations through anti-discrimination strategies.	Goal 3 Cultural Heritage	4.1 Conduct a review of HR policies and procedures to identify existing anti-discrimination provisions and future needs.	June 2025	Manager People & Culture
		4.2 Develop, implement and communicate an anti-discrimination policy for our organisation.	June 2026	Manager People & Culture
		4.3 Engage with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff and/or Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander advisors to consult on our anti-discrimination policy.	June 2025	Manager People & Culture
		4.4 Educate senior leaders and managers on the effects of racism.	Dec 2026	Manager People & Culture;



: RESPECT

Respect is one of our organisational values – we value diversity, appreciate others, and show our respect to all. Through our activities we will increase appreciation and respect for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, empowering our staff to learn about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and our Shire, and increase their understanding of meaningful self-determination and reconciliation.

Action	Alignment to Dhelkunya Dja Country Plan	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
5: Increase understanding, value and recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, histories, knowledge and rights through cultural learning.	Goal 2 Cultural Practices and Customs	5.1 Conduct a review of cultural learning needs within our organisation specifically relating to the Recognition and Settlement Agreement (RSA) & cultural safety.	Aug 2025	Reconciliation Officer
		5.2 Consult local Traditional Owners and/or Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander advisors on the development and implementation of cultural learning for Council's learning strategy.	Dec 2025	Manager People & Culture; Reconciliation Officer
		5.3 Develop, implement and communicate a cultural learning strategy for all staff.	Dec 2025	Manager People & Culture; Reconciliation Officer
		5.4 Provide opportunities for our RAP Working Group members, HR Managers, and other key leadership staff to participate in formal and structured cultural learning.	Dec 2026	Manager People & Culture; Reconciliation Officer
6: Demonstrate respect to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples by observing cultural protocols.	Goal 2 Cultural Practices and Customs	6.1 Increase staffs understanding of the purpose and significance behind cultural protocols, including Acknowledgement of Country and Welcome to Country.	June 2025	Reconciliation Officer
		6.2 Develop, implement and communicate a cultural protocol document, including protocols for Welcome to Country and Acknowledgement of Country.	June 2025	Reconciliation Officer
		6.3 Invite a local Traditional Owner or Custodian to provide a Welcome to Country or other appropriate cultural protocol at significant events each year.	Jan 25 – Jan 27	Reconciliation Officer
		6.4 Include an Acknowledgement of Country or other appropriate protocols at the commencement of formal meetings and events.	Jan 25 – Jan 27	Reconciliation Officer
7: Build respect for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and histories by celebrating NAIDOC Week and other days of significance.	Goal 2 Cultural Practices and Customs	7.1 RAP Working Group to participate in external NAIDOC week event.	Jul 25 – Jul 26	Reconciliation Officer
		7.2 Review HR Policies and Procedures to remove barriers to staff participating in NAIDOC week.	Dec 2026	Manager People & Culture
	Goal 3 Cultural Heritage	7.3 Promote and encourage participation in external NAIDOC events to all staff.	July 2025-26	Reconciliation Officer
		7.4 Promote local and national NAIDOC recognition and events via our social media to increase awareness and encourage community involvement.	June 2025-26	Reconciliation Officer, Communications officer



: OPPORTUNITIES

Our Innovate RAP will create opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, organisations and communities and contribute to positive relationships. These opportunities develop two-way benefits by strengthening First Nations perspectives within our core business activities.

Action	Alignment to Dhelkunya Dja Country Plan	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
8: Improve employment outcomes by increasing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander recruitment, retention and professional development.	Goal 2 Cultural Practices and Customs	8.1 Build understanding of current Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staffing to inform future employment and professional development opportunities.	June 2025	Manager People & Culture; Reconciliation Officer
	Goal 3 Cultural Heritage	8.2 Engage with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff to consult on our recruitment, retention, and professional development strategy.	June 2025	Manager People & Culture
		8.3 Develop and implement an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander recruitment, retention, and professional development strategy.	Dec 2025	Manager People & Culture
		8.4 Review HR and recruitment policies and procedures to remove barriers to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander participation in our workplace.	Dec 2025	Manager People & Culture
		8.5 Advertise job vacancies to effectively reach Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders.	Dec 2025	Manager People & Culture
		8.6 Increase the percentage of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff employed in our workforce.	Jan 2027	Manager People & Culture
9: Increase Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander supplier diversity to support improved economic and social outcomes.	Goal 3 Cultural Heritage	9.1 Develop and communicate opportunities for procurement of goods and services from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander businesses to staff.	Dec 2026	Manager Finance; Reconciliation Officer
	Goal 7 Self-determination	9.2 Review and update procurement practices to remove barriers to procuring goods and services from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander businesses.	Dec 2026	Manager Finance; Reconciliation Officer
	Goal 8 Traditional Owner Economy	9.3 Develop commercial relationships with Aboriginal and /or Torres Strait Islander businesses with a focus on Djaara operated and owned businesses.	Dec 2026	Manager Community and Economy; Reconciliation Officer
		9.4 Investigate Supply Nation membership.	Dec 2025	Manager Community and Economy
		9.5 Work with the Visitor Information Centres to promote Cultural Tourism initiatives available through DUMAWUL.	June 2025	Reconciliation Officer
		9.6 The promotion of Cultural Tourism initiatives with DUMAWUL.	June 2025	Manager Community and Economy; Reconciliation Officer



: GOVERNANCE

It is important to embed ownership of this plan at all levels of the organisation of Council. Through regular reporting and consultation, we can track our progress, celebrate our achievements, and identify gaps and challenges.

Action	Alignment to Dhelkunya Dja Country Plan	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
10: Establish and maintain an effective RAP Working group (RWG) to drive governance of the RAP.	Goal 2 Cultural Practices and Customs	10.1 Maintain Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander representation on the Internal Reconciliation Working Group (RWG)	Mar 2025	Reconciliation Officer
		10.2 Establish and apply a Terms of Reference for the Internal RWG.	Mar 2025	Reconciliation Officer
	Goal 3 Cultural Heritage	10.3 Internal RWG to meet at least four times per year to drive and monitor RAP implementation.	Feb 2025	Reconciliation Officer
11: Provide appropriate support for effective implementation of RAP commitments.	Goal 2 Cultural Practices and Customs	11.1 Define resource needs for the Innovate RAP implementation	June 2025	Reconciliation Officer
		11.2 Engage senior leaders and other staff in the delivery of RAP commitments.	May 2025	Reconciliation Officer
	Goal 3 Cultural Heritage	11.3 Define and maintain appropriate systems to track, measure and report on RAP commitments.	July 2025	Reconciliation Officer
		11.4 Appoint and maintain an internal RAP Champion from senior management.	Mar 2025	Reconciliation Officer
		11.5 Develop a proposal to include Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander positions on Councils Reconciliation Advisory committee.	June 2026	Reconciliation Officer

: GOVERNANCE (cont.)

Action	Alignment to Dhelkunya Dja Country Plan	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
12: Build accountability and transparency through reporting RAP achievements, challenges, and learnings both internally and externally.	Goal 2 Cultural Practices and Customs	12.1 - Complete and submit the Annual RAP Impact Survey to Reconciliation Australia	2025-26	Reconciliation Officer
		12.2 Report RAP progress to all staff and senior leaders quarterly.	Apr/ Jul/ Oct/ Jan 2025-26	Reconciliation Officer
	Goal 3 Cultural Heritage	12.3 Publicly report our RAP achievements, challenges, and learnings annually.	30 Sep 2025-26	Reconciliation Officer
		12.4 Investigate participating in Reconciliation Australia's biennial Workplace RAP Barometer.	Feb 2026	Reconciliation Officer
13: Continue our reconciliation journey by developing our next RAP	Goal 3 Cultural Heritage	13.1 Register via Reconciliation Australia's website to begin development of our next RAP.	July 2026	Reconciliation Officer
		13.2 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.	Feb 2025	Reconciliation Officer
		13.3 Contact Reconciliation Australia to request our unique link, to access the online RAP Impact Survey.	Aug 2025-26	Reconciliation Officer

► Jason Kerr
Welcome didgeridoo



: Appendix

Federal and International Policies, Legislations and Conventions that inform our RAP

Australian Government

- Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Act 1986
- Racial Discrimination Act 1975
- Council of Australian Governments (COAG) Closing the Gap 2008
- Indigenous Procurement Policy 2019
- Indigenous Advancement Strategy (IAS) 2014 and IAS Guidelines 2019
- National Engage with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff and/or Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander advisors to consult and Torres Strait Islander Education Strategy 2015
- National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Plan 2021-2031
- National Anti-Racism Strategy 2012

International Context

- International Convention for the Elimination of all Forms of Racial Discrimination 1965
- International Convention on the Economic, Social and Cultural Rights 1966
- International Convention on Civil and Political Rights 1966
- United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People 2007
- United Nations World Conference on Indigenous People 2014

Local and State Policies, Legislations and Conventions that inform our RAP

(see Appendix for Australian Government and International Context)

Hepburn Shire Council Context

- Community Vision 2031– Hepburn Shire, an inclusive rural community located in Dja Dja Wurrung country where all people are valued, partnerships are fostered, environment is protected, diversity supported, and innovation embraced.
- Council Plan and Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan 2021-2025
- Active Women and Girls Strategy
- Affordable Housing Action Plan and Strategy
- Biodiversity Strategy
- Community Engagement Framework and Policy
- Gender Equality Action Plan 2021-2025
- Positive Ageing Strategy
- Procurement Policy
- Recreation and Open Space Strategy
- Sustainable Hepburn

► Uncle Rick Nelson at Lalgambuk (Mt Franklin)

Photo: Gary Lawrence

Victorian Government Context

- Victorian Aboriginal and Local Government Strategy 2020-2025
- Victorian Aboriginal Affairs Framework 2018-2023
- Victorian Aboriginal Economic Strategy 2013-2020
- Self-Determination Reform Framework 2019
- Local Government Act 2020
- Victorian Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities 2006
- Victorian Equal Opportunity Act 2010
- Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006 and Aboriginal Heritage Regulations 2018
- Traditional Owner Settlement Act 2010
- Native Title Act 1993
- Advancing Treaty Process with Aboriginal Victorians Act 2018



: Glossary

Aboriginal	First people persons from mainland Australia
Torres Strait Islander	First people persons from the Torres Strait Islands
Self-Determination	Defined under the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples as the ability of Indigenous people to freely determine their political status and pursue their economic, social, and cultural development (Victorian Aboriginal and Local Government Strategy 2021 – 2026: Pathways to Stronger Partnerships)
Council	Hepburn Shire Council
RAP	Reconciliation Action Plan Recognised Aboriginal Party 'RAP' is an acronym that has two meanings
NAIDOC	National Aborigines and Islanders Day Observe Committee
NRW	National Reconciliation Week
LGA	Local Government Area
Traditional Owners	The descendants of the inhabitants that occupied a particular region before European settlement, having a spiritual and cultural connection to the lands and waterways of their ancestors. Aboriginal Land Rights (Northern Territory) Act 1976
Djandak	Dja Dja Wurrung Country
DJAARA	The Registered Aboriginal Party of the Dja Dja Wurrung People operated by the Dja Dja Wurrung Traditional Owners
DJANDAK	The Enterprise, owned and operated by the Dja Dja Wurrung Traditional Owners, devoted to land management services
DUMAWUL	The Enterprise, owned and operated by the Dja Dja Wurrung Traditional Owners, a social enterprise for Djaara creatives
Supply Nation	A national organisation that supports the growth of First Nations businesses through supplier diversity.
RAC	Reconciliation Advisory Committee
RWG	Reconciliation Working Group
Reconciliation Australia	The national body responsible for the oversight and endorsement of Reconciliation Action Plans.

**"When we all come together,
we can make change.**


Caring for our Country binds me to the past, present and future. Country is the centre of culture, and we must practice, revitalise, and develop sustainable ideas and traditional land management techniques into the future to continue to heal Country. Being on Country and feeling connected actively heals physical, mental and spiritual wellbeing. It is in our nature, and our nature is Country. Without Country, we don't have culture.

**When I look after Country,
Country looks after me."**

*Sharlee Dunolly-Lee –
Djaara Woman*

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