

**Wyndham Reconciliation Action Plan 2017 - 2019   
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Final Report

July 2020

Background

The previous Wyndham City Plan 2013-2017 committed Council to developing a RAP to formalise: A process of Reconciliation between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal peoples that aims to redress injustices; increase equity and access to services; and increase wellbeing for the whole community.

The current RAP (2017–2019) was developed in consultation with Reconciliation Australia (RA), the lead body for Reconciliation. RA provides a four-tiered approach to RAP development. In April 2015, Council adopted The Statement of Commitment, which provided a set of shared principles that describe how Council commits to work with Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people in the context of Reconciliation. This Statement of Commitment marked the completion of the first milestone and provided the foundation for Council to develop its current Innovate RAP. It had a two-year timeframe and a focused on working with Aboriginal stakeholders to “test and trial approaches to building relationships, showing respect and improving opportunities.”

To support the development and implementation of the RAP, the Wyndham Reconciliation Advisory Committee (WRAC) was established in 2016. The WRAC is co-chaired by Councillor Henry Barlow and an Aboriginal community member.

A RAP Management Group was also established in 2017. Chaired by the Director of City Life, the group plays a key role in leading the implementation and evaluation process across the organisation.

With the completion of the RAP (2017-2019), the current Wyndham City Plan 2017-2021 (strategic objective 1.2.6) commits council to have a RAP in place to lead us through the life of this City Plan.

Council and the community built a vision to guide its work for Reconciliation in Wyndham City over the 2-year life of the RAP.

The vision included three core elements:

* Acknowledgement of past injustices and their ongoing harmful impacts today
* Respect for the land and the rights of Aboriginal people to determine their future
* Healthy Aboriginal families strengthened by culture and community

All of our actions were organised around the key themes:

* Relationships
* Respect
* Opportunities
* Monitoring and Evaluation

The actions and their deliverables developed under these themes were designed to contribute to the achievement of our vision.

The establishment of the Wunggurrwil Dhurrung centre sits at the heart of Wyndham’s first *Innovate* RAP (2017-2019) where partnership with the local Aboriginal community at every stage has been vital to Council’s journey towards Reconciliation.

Councils journey working alongside community in the development of this centre has been recognised on a number of platforms with Council being finalists in the 2018 LGPRO awards as well as the 2019 HART awards.

Alongside the development of the Centre, other key achievements include:

* Wyndham Council has programmed a number of 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, Libraries and Venues.
* Council participate, facilitate and strengthen a wide range of networks on a regional, state and national level.
* Establishment and maintenance of a number of reconciliation governance groups within Council, including the Aboriginal Staff Advisory Group, and Community Reconciliation Advisory Committee to enable Aboriginal participation in decision making about the whole of Wyndham City as well as issues specific to the Aboriginal community.
* Education about Aboriginal people and culture is promoted across all early years through a variety of programs and training opportunities. Council Kindergartens were shortlisted as HART award finalists for developing and implementing RAPs through Narragunnawali 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 Aboriginal Cultural Competency course.
* Aboriginal Cultural Heritage and Design features are incorporated into the Truganina East Family Learning Centre and the Werribee Integrated Community Learning Hub. Meaningful acknowledgement plaques have been installed at all council facilities.
* Council is meeting the target in line with State Government of 1% spend Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Businesses. 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.
* Council participated in the national 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.

Council has submitted annual reporting to Reconciliation Australia throughout the life of the RAP. Overall, implementation of the RAP has gone very well with the majority of actions completed or currently progressing.

Many of the progressing actions are ongoing commitments that will be carried over and further built upon in the next RAP.

The below provides a snapshot of Wyndham’s progress against the 127 deliverables in the RAP against each theme and highlights our strong position to further embed and build on our reconciliation commitments.

Progress Updates

The tables below outline progress for each action of our RAP 2017-2019

**Relationships**

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| ACTIONS | PROGRESS |
| **1.A.** RAP Management Group monitors development, implementation, evaluation and reporting of the RAP across the organisation. | **Completed:**  The RAP Management group has been effective in providing oversight for the development and implementation of the RAP across the organisation. All meetings have been well attended by senior members across Council. The RAP Management Group will have a continuing role in the design and delivery of Wyndham’s next RAP. |
| **1. B.** Establish mechanisms for Aboriginal community members to provide advice and guidance in the development and monitoring of the RAP. | **Completed:**  The Wyndham Reconciliation Advisory Committee (WRAC) has been an important conduit for local Aboriginal community members to provide guidance in the development, implementation and evaluation of the current RAP. The committee is Co-Chair by a Councillor and an Aboriginal Community member. The committee met every two months during the life of the RAP and provided a forum for Council departments to discuss how they were progressing their deliverables as well as receive timely feedback. |
| **1.C.** Raise internal and external awareness of our RAP to promote Reconciliation across our business and sector. | **Completed:**  During the life of this RAP, Council undertook several key actions to increase RAP awareness across all its business areas. These include active conversations, internal networks, working groups and the RAP Management Group. Copies of the RAP have been made available for all staff and community. RAP awareness was incorporated into Council’s Corporate Induction program as well as the Aboriginal Cultural Competency course added to the staff training calendar. The unveiling of the ‘Possum Skin Cloak’ Exhibit in the Civic Centre Reception provides an important prompt to discuss the RAP not only internally but with the local community in general. |
| **2.A.** Organise, support and promote internal and external events that bring people together and promote Reconciliation during National Reconciliation Week. | **Completed:**  As part of its RAP commitment, Council has held several events across Wyndham to bring people together and promote Reconciliation during National Reconciliation Week (NRW). Council Libraries and Community Centres organised displays and activities, Youth Services and the Arts Culture & Events units collaborated on an equally well received Kulin Dreaming Festival. Other NRW related events offered by Council included annual guided walks and tree planting along the Werribee River. Community discussion around Reconciliation was also prompted through a special screening of the ‘Warrigal Creek Massacre’ documentary organised in collaboration with Council and the Western Region Local Government Reconciliation Network. |
| **2.B.** The RAP Management Group participates in events to recognise and celebrate National Reconciliation Week | **Completed:**  Many staff have been actively involved in the events held across Council during NRW. The RAP Management Group has had an important role encouraging staff awareness and participation around NRW in their respective departments. As senior leaders in Council, many RAP Management Group members have had a role in leading or facilitating some of those events. |
| **2.C.** Support Community-led Reconciliation events. | **Completed:**  Council made available through its grants program, opportunities for community groups to apply for funding to events including those related to NRW. Council also encouraged community groups to access other available funding sources such as Reconciliation Victoria for NRW specific events around Wyndham. |
| **3.A.** Develop and maintain mutually beneficial relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, communities and organisations to support positive outcomes in their specific areas of interest. | **Completed:**  As part of its RAP commitment, Council actively sought input from the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities to identify the best way to work together as well as shape responses to that community’s specific areas of interest. Guiding principles on how to engage with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community has now been embedded in Council’s Community Engagement Framework and Model, which has since been shared across the organisation. |
| **3.B.** Work to ensure participation and partnership with the range of Aboriginal stakeholders in every stage of development of a Wyndham Aboriginal Community Centre that achieves community aspirations. | **Completed:**  The newly completed Wunggurrwil Dhurrung Centre (which means ‘Strong heart’ in Wadawurrung language) is a tangible testament to Council’s commitment under the RAP to work closely with Aboriginal stakeholders to bring a project to fruition. The Centre, comprises of three components- Koling wada-ngal - The dedicated Aboriginal Community Centre managed by a community led committee, Balim Balim - The Integrated Family Centre which will provide universal services such as Kindergarten, MCH, youth and support services with a focus on learning through Aboriginal culture and Yaluk - The Neighbourhood Community Centre. Aboriginal voices were involved in every stage of the centre’s development and the Partnership Agreement and Service Coordination Plan between Council and the Koling Wada-Ngal. |
| **4.A.** Strengthen collaboration between local government and Aboriginal communities at regional and state levels. | **Completed:**  To strengthen collaboration between Council and Aboriginal communities, Council has participated regularly in the Western Region Local Government Reconciliation Network. Additionally, Council has shared relevant information on the Maggolee website – a site dedicated to local government and Aboriginal communities working together. The current RAP was also aligned with Wyndham/Hobsons Bay Local Aboriginal Network’s 5-year plan. |
| **4.B.** Strengthen local and regional networks to promote collaboration and improve access to culturally appropriate services with Aboriginal people across the life stages. | **Completed:**  To strengthen and improve the delivery of ‘culturally appropriate services’ across Aboriginal people life stages, under this RAP Council has resourced and facilitated a Wyndham Aboriginal Service Providers Network. It has also actively participated and contributed to the Regional Aboriginal Justice Advisory Committee and Indigenous Family Violence Regional Action Group. Council has also utilised the Wyndham Best Start in Life Alliance to reach out to vulnerable Aboriginal families to improve access to early childhood services. The Wunggurrwil Dhurrung Centre as part of its partnership model and service provision plan will also support improved delivery of services to the Aboriginal community. |
| **5.** Support collaboration with Registered Aboriginal Parties and Traditional Owner organisations for the protection of Aboriginal cultural heritage and land management through the formation of an internal Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Working Group. | **In Progress:**  As part of its RAP commitment, Council has established an Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Working Group to help facilitate the protection of Aboriginal cultural heritage and land management. This group, which meets 3 times a year, is in the process of preparing principles and guidelines for collaborating with Traditional Owner Organisations around this space. Additionally, it has progressed the development of an Aboriginal Heritage Management Toolkit for staff as well as improving access to resources about sites of Aboriginal significance in collaboration with Wathaurung Aboriginal Corporation. |
| **6.A.** Support Aboriginal people to build capacity for governance and leadership in Wyndham City | **Completed:**  As part of its RAP commitment, Council has reached out to the local Aboriginal community through word of mouth, networks, email, social media, newsletters etc to promote the latter’s participation in Community Leadership Programs, Volunteer & Community Trainings, Pathway Scholarships and Community Grants program. The delivery of an Aboriginal Dispute and Conflict Resolution session by Dispute Settlement Centre of Victoria at Wunggurrwil Dhurrung Centre is an achievement of the Council’s RAP commitment. |
| **6.B.** Promote participation of Aboriginal people in Council governance structures to enable involvement in decision-making about the whole of Wyndham City as well as issues specific to the Aboriginal community. | **In Progress:**  During the course of the RAP, Council continued to encourage and increase participation of Aboriginal community members in its various governance structures. In view of that, Council has made significant progress through increased community memberships in the Wyndham Reconciliation Advisory Committee (WRAC), Aboriginal Services Network of Wyndham (ASNoW) and the Koling Wada-Ngal Committee as a few examples. Additionally, Council continues to work with peak bodies such as the Victoria Local Government Association to encourage more Aboriginal community participation in the local electoral process. |

**Respect**

| ACTIONS | PROGRESS |
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| **1.** Engage employees in cultural learning opportunities to increase understanding and appreciation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, histories and achievements | **In Progress:**  Council employees have a range of opportunities under the RAP to understand and appreciate Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, histories and achievements. This included the promotion of Australia’s *Share Our Pride* online tool to all employees as well as successfully piloting the Centre for Cultural Competency’s *A Foundation in Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Competence* Online Course – in which over 100 Council employees participated. Council is working towards embedding these opportunities in the ongoing staff training calendar. |
| **2.A.** Engage Council in recognising the First Peoples of Australia and the names of the Traditional Owners of the lands on which Wyndham City is being built. | **In Progress:**  Council is progressing the development and implementation of internal protocols for recognising the First Nations People of Australia and local Traditional Owners. Also, Acknowledgement and Welcome to Country resources are readily available to staff and local community on Council’s website. A Council specific cultural protocol document has also been progressed. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander flags are now flown outside the main Civic Centre year around. |
| **2.B.** Explore opportunities for incorporating Aboriginal placenames, languages, design features and cultural heritage information in a wide range of existing infrastructure and future developments. | **Completed:**  The naming of the Wunggurrwil Dhurrung Centre, meaning ‘Strong heart’ in Wadawurrung language, was decided after extensive consultation with the Aboriginal community, the Wathaurung Aboriginal Corporation and the Koling Wada-Ngal Committee. This project has many Aboriginal design features and has provided an excellent model for similar future Council projects. |
| **3.A.** Provide opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in the community and workplace to engage with NAIDOC Week events. | **In Progress:**  Every year Council holds several events and activities in recognition of NAIDOC Week – including a Flag raising ceremony that has continued to grow each year – which has been well-received by the Aboriginal and broader community. Internally, there are policies and guidelines in place to support employee participation in NAIDOC activities. Also, community grants are available for local groups who want to hold activities to commemorate and learn more about NAIDOC. |
| **3.B.** Recognise and acknowledge historic sites and stories of past injustices, during NAIDOC Week and throughout the year. | **In Progress:**  Multiple arts and culture exhibitions are held in the municipality to recognise and acknowledge the history and injustices suffered by the Aboriginal community during NAIDOC Week. An example is Council’s *Stolen Wealth A Fresh Look At The Impact of Colonialism* exhibition held in 2019. Council will continue to support the Aboriginal communities work with Traditional Owners to identify sites of past injustice and how they are best recognised and acknowledged. |
| **4.A.** Ensure that Reconciliation priorities are incorporated into the City Plan and integrated into all strategic plans and policies. | **Completed:**  All RAP priorities are aligned with the City Plan 2017-2021 and are reflected in new strategies and policies such as the new Learning Strategy. Furthermore, key Council departments are working on RAP implementation plans that integrate into their existing work plans. |
| **4.B.** 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 | **Completed:** An Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community profile is now regularly checked and updated on Councils website. This information is accessible to the general public and can inform the planning and service delivery for a wide range or providers. |
| **5.A.** Promote education by and about Aboriginal people and cultures in early years. | **Completed:**  All Council Kindergartens have implemented the Narragunnawali: Reconciliation in Schools & Early Learning Program. As a result, Council’s Early Education & Care Services (EECS) received a Special mention in the 2019 HART award from Reconciliation Australia for its ‘EECS Reconciliation Agenda’ and sharing lessons learned at the State education conference.  Council is also a key stakeholder in the delivery of the State’s Marrung Aboriginal Education Plan 2016-2026.  Reconciliation has been a key focus for the EECS staff. |
| **5.B.** Promote ongoing learning about Aboriginal cultures, histories and politics. | **In Progress:**  Council shares education resources with local residents such as the *Rivers to Recognition* Education Resource Directory and Koorie Education Support information as useful tools for promoting ongoing learning about Aboriginal cultures, histories and politics. Council also continues to promote ongoing learning by embedding Reconciliation themes and periodic articles in its community centre newsletters. Council has also progressed the delivery of specialised training on Aboriginal Land Management practices to local education networks. |
| **5.C.** Support implementation of the Marrung Aboriginal Education Plan 2016-2026 to improve education outcomes for local Aboriginal people at every stage of their learning and development journey from early childhood through school and the transition into post-school pathways. | **Completed:** Council has actively promoted the Marrung Aboriginal Education Plan, DET’s Koorie Engagement Support, the Narragunnawali program and others to all local education providers and relevant service provider networks such as the Aboriginal Services Network of Wyndham. |

**Opportunities**

| ACTIONS | PROGRESS |
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| **1.** Investigate opportunities to improve and increase Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment outcomes within our workplace. | **In Progress:**  The Aboriginal Staff Advisory Group was formed in 2018. It provides a network for Aboriginal staff and feedback and advice to the organisation on experiences, practices, awareness raising and learning activities. To date the Group have helped track inclusion, have had input to Reconciliation Week activities, the Inclusion Strategy and helped guide the drafting of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Employment Framework.  Additionally, Council has reached out to Aboriginal Employment service providers to increase local government opportunities among the Aboriginal Community. Council has also created a number of Aboriginal-identified roles in strategic priority areas such as Youth Services and Maternal & Child Health. |
| **2.** Align Council business development strategies with the aims of the state government Tharamba Bugheen Aboriginal Business Strategy to   * improve the accessibility of business support * improve the visibility and networks of Aboriginal businesses in the region * strengthen the entrepreneurial culture and business experience of Aboriginal people in Wyndham * increase the number and diversity of Aboriginal suppliers within Council. | **In Progress:**  Council has adapted some of its internal process’ to better engage Aboriginal business in its procurement of services. These include updating its financial systems, request for tender and new supplier forms to better capture Aboriginal vendors. Council has connected with the Kinaway Chamber of Commerce Victoria and joined the Supply Nation Network. Council has facilitated connections of Aboriginal businesses to relevant networks, business development opportunities and events to increase their profile as vendors. |
| **3.** Maintain a partnership approach with Aboriginal community networks to ensure that Aboriginal people experience improved outcomes in any developments with regard to correctional facilities and services related to the Justice system in Wyndham City. | **In Progress:**  Council has been actively involved with the Regional Aboriginal Justice Advisory Committee to ensure that Aboriginal voices and needs are heard in the justice sector including progressing a Wyndham Justice Precinct as well as providing input into a planned Youth Detention Centre in the municipality. There is also continuing Council support for the Wunggurrwil Dhurrung Centre to become a focal point for Aboriginal people engagement with the justice systems including a range of justice related services. |

**Monitoring & Evaluation Reporting**

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| ACTIONS | PROGRESS |
| **A.** Report RAP achievements, challenges and learnings to Reconciliation Australia. | **Completed:**  Council has met all Reconciliation Australia’s reporting requirement for the current RAP. Council has also participated in the RAP Barometer Survey (with 250 employees taking the survey) and the findings were presented to the RAP Management Group. Findings for these reports and surveys will be used by Council to inform its next RAP. |
| **B.** Report RAP achievements, challenges and learnings internally and externally | **Completed:**  Councils achievements, challenges and learnings from this current RAP have been documented, reviewed and commented on by the relevant governance bodies such as Reconciliation Australia, the Wyndham Reconciliation Advisory Committee, the RAP Management Group and Wyndham Council Executive. |
| **C.** Review, refresh and update RAP. | **Completed:**  Council is working with relevant stakeholders and Reconciliation Australia to map out Wyndham’s next Reconciliation Action Plan. |

For further information on Wyndham’s Reconciliation Action Plan please contact the Service Planning, Partnering and Reform Unit: [PlanningPartneringandReform@wyndham.vic.gov.au](mailto:PlanningPartneringandReform@wyndham.vic.gov.au) or phone: (03) 9742 0777