

# Innovate Reconciliation Action Plan

June 2023 – June 2025



RECONCILIATION  
ACTION PLAN

INNOVATE

**Yana djerring ba  
ngarrnga djerring**

Walking together  
and listening together

knox



# Acknowledgement of Traditional Custodians

Knox City Council acknowledges the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung people and Bunurong people of the Kulin Nation as Traditional Custodians of the land in Knox. The Knox Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities come from a variety of different Nations within Australia including the Torres Strait, the Traditional Custodians and Stolen Generation. As such, we pay respect to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elders, past and present, who have resided in the area and have been an integral part of the region's histories.

Located at the foot of the Dandenong Ranges, Knox has many places of historic significance to the Kulin Nation. Important cultural and historical sites within Knox hold both the traditional knowledge of the First Nations peoples and the traumatic stories of colonisation.

The journey ahead for Knox involves the land, the Traditional Custodians, the local First Nations communities, the wider community and the Council itself. Walking together and listening together to create a culturally safe and culturally rich community for all.

In 2021, Knox City Council announced an intention to promote a “whole of business” mindset, moving forward in its acknowledgement and respect of First Nations peoples, ensuring cross functional collaboration as opportunities present themselves.

(Knox Council Plan 2021–2025)



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## **Child Safe Commitment Statement:**

Knox City Council has zero tolerance for child abuse and all forms of harm to children.

All children and young people who access our services, programs, events and facilities have the right to feel safe and be safe. This includes spaces owned or managed by Council. We take the wellbeing and safety of children and young people in our care seriously. We maintain a child safe organisation by embedding the protection of children into everyday thinking and practice.

All Knox City Council employees, contractors and volunteers are responsible for ensuring children and young people are valued, heard and protected from abuse.



# A message from the Mayor & CEO

From the heart of Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung and Bunurong land, we are proud to present Knox City Council's Reconciliation Action Plan.

In doing so, we acknowledge the Traditional Owners of this land and pay our respects to their Elders, past and present.

Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples hold unique cultural and spiritual relationships to the land, waters and seas which forms a crucial part of our collective histories and future. Connection to Country is essential to First Peoples cultures, health and wellbeing and provides an opportunity to acknowledge and share cultural knowledge with the wider communities.

This represents Council's first Reconciliation Action Plan, enabling us to take meaningful action to advance and champion reconciliation and truth-telling in Knox.

It is important to recognise that there cannot be reconciliation without truth-telling. Acknowledging our histories and approaching it with openness and honesty is the only way to create a more positive future together.

Our Reconciliation Action Plan contains specific, actionable directions to embed the principles of reconciliation in everything we do. It will provide tangible and substantive benefits for our First Nations communities.

To do this, the Plan identifies five key areas to focus future efforts and collaboration:

- Health and wellbeing;
- Recognition and respect;
- Employment and economic development;
- Civic participation; and
- Cultural heritage.

The Reconciliation Action Plan was developed in conversation with a working group of Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung and Bunurong Elders and our local First Nations communities. We thank them for their invaluable contribution and support.

The First Nations peoples living in Knox come from a variety of different Nations within Australia. Their collective stories, histories and experiences enrich our community and deserve celebration and respect.

In the spirit of empathy, respect and openness to shared experiences we are pleased to present this Reconciliation Action Plan.



**Cr Marcia Timmers-Leitch**  
Mayor



**Bruce Dobson**  
CEO

# A message from the CEO of Reconciliation Australia

Reconciliation Australia commends Knox City 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 Knox City 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, Knox City 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. Knox City Council is part of a strong network of more than 2,200 corporate, government, and not-for-profit organisations that have taken goodwill and intention, and transformed it into action.

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



**Karen Mundine**  
Chief Executive Officer  
Reconciliation Australia





# Language and Terminology for Knox consultation

**Traditional Owner:** are the traditional people and nation of a given area. Today, Traditional Owners are descendants of the original inhabitants and have continuing spiritual, cultural, emotional, cultural protocols and physical connection with the land where their ancestors lived. Ownership noting a sense of being owned by Country and referring to, and care of, Country.

**Traditional Custodian:** is similar to Traditional Owner placing emphasis on the continual connection and care of country.

An Aboriginal person who is a member of a local descendants group having certain right and responsibilities in relation to a piece of land, area or sea.

**First Nations:** is a preferred term at Knox and at various government levels when referring to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as a group. It is a shorter phrase that maintains a sense of sovereignty.

**Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander:** is a term that keeps cultural identity while grouping First Nations. Abbreviations such as 'ATSI' in place of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander is offensive and should not be used.

**Aboriginal:** is the best accepted term we have at present in Victoria to refer to a group of Aboriginal people from many tribes and Nations. It is worth noting though that while this is an English word that is also used to describe many Aboriginal peoples around the world, Aboriginal people here have asserted a strong sense of ownership over the word and many use it to describe themselves and each other. Its use is also strongly associated with the Aboriginal flag as a unifying symbol of solidarity, protest and strength.

**Torres Strait Islander:** is a widely accepted term used to describe people from the Torres Strait Islands in northern Queensland, who now live in many parts of Australia.

**Kulin Nation:** is a Nation of Aboriginal clan with a territory extending across Victoria, Eastern South Australia and Far Western New South Wales. In Victoria it includes the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung, Bunurong (Boonwurrung speaking), Taungurung, Wadawurrung (sometimes Wathawurrung) and Dja Wurrung people.

**Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung:** are the Traditional Owners of the Central-Eastern Kulin Nation. The Majority of Knox is on their traditional lands.

**Bunurong:** are the Traditional Owners of the South-Eastern Kulin Nation. The Southern sections of Knox is on their traditional lands.

**Welcome to Country:** is delivered as a speech by Traditional Owners to welcome visitors to their Country.

**Acknowledgement of Country:** is an opportunity for anyone to show respect for Traditional Owners and the continuing connection of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to Country.

**Truth telling:** offers an important opportunity for the telling of the truth of Australian histories to achieve justice and healing. It can be a tool for all Australians to recognise, understand and accept the wrongs of the past and the impact of these wrongs on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Nations.

**Yoo-rook Justice Commission:** is a formal truth telling process into historical and ongoing injustices experienced by First Nations in Victoria.

**Country:** is a term used by First Nations to refer to land, waters and skies to which they are connected through ancestral ties and family origins. Country is a proper noun which is why it is capitalised, Aboriginal people refer to Country the same way we would to a person. For example: Country is sick, Country needs time to heal. Country is alive. Country is timeless and Country is us.

**First Peoples Assembly of Victoria:** is an independent and democratically elected body to represent Traditional Owners of Country and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in Victoria, on the pathway to Treaty with the Victorian Government.

**First Peoples - State Relations:** is a Department of Premier and Cabinet responsible for cultural rights, Treaty and Truth, self-determination, heritage and an extensive program of priority work for First Peoples.

## Acknowledgments

### Acknowledgement of Artists

Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung / Yorta-Yorta artist Simone Thomson and Bunurong artist Adam Magennis have designed digital works on the themes of “Country, Culture, Connection” to celebrate and acknowledge Wurundjeri and Bunurong Country and Culture.

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#### Simone Thomson



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#### Adam Magennis



### Acknowledgement of Voice

Knox City Council would like to acknowledge the time and wisdom given by people involved in creating this Reconciliation Action Plan, including:

#### Knox City Council Reconciliation Action Plan Working Group

Thank you for your leadership in guiding and creating this RAP -

- Uncle David Farrall (Local Elder);
- Karen Milward (Local leader);
- Andrew Peters (Local leader);
- Elke Smirl (Mullum Indigenous Gathering Place);
- Jida McCartney (Boorndawan Willam Aboriginal Healing Service); and
- Les Chessells (Local Leader).

#### Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung and Bunurong Elders

Thank you for your willingness to have conversations about what is important from a Traditional Owner point of view, ensuring that issues that relate to Country are in conversation with those that speak for Country.

#### The Local First Nations Communities

Thank you for your participation in conversations, your guidance and ideas ensuring this RAP has a strong voice from communities has been critical.

#### Knox City Council staff, Leadership and Councilors

Thank you for your willingness to be led by First Nations communities in the journey of reconciliation and truth telling. Increasing the trust and understanding of Council is crucial to the goal of increasing cultural safety and pride for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in Knox and in Caring for Country.

Thank you for your willingness to participate in various conversations, forums and meetings to align area work plans with the opportunities to partner with First Nations communities.

#### Photography

Photos supplied by Knox City Council.

# Our vision for reconciliation and truth telling

**Our vision for reconciliation involves the land, the Traditional Custodians, the local First Peoples communities, and the wider community. Walking together and listening together to create a culturally safe and culturally rich community for all.**

Reconciliation and truth telling are inseparable when healing and relationships are the goal. Deep listening to the stories of the Dreaming, Cultures, histories and the impact of colonisation on First Peoples and Country is the first step in understanding, respect, relationships and healing.

It is an ongoing journey that aims to bring together and strengthen relationships between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Nations and the wider community. It is about helping everyone understand our shared histories and how the past affects the lives of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Nations today.

Reconciliation is about respecting and valuing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Nations heritages and people and aims to achieve equality in life expectancy, education, employment and other areas of disadvantage.

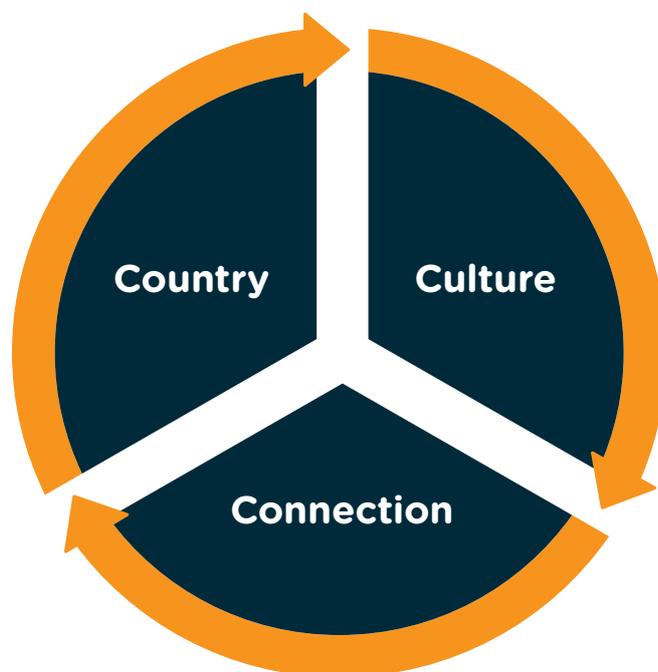
We support reconciliation and truth telling wherever possible in practical and symbolic ways to show respect and value cultures. We do this through:

## Country, Culture, Connection

**Country:** respecting and protecting the land, the stories, the heritage, the native species, traditional land practices, and healing Country.

**Culture:** listening and walking together to understand cultural recognition, education, safety, continuing practices, the arts, bush knowledge, stories, truth telling and healing

**Connection:** to Country, to Traditional Custodians, to First Nations People, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Nations specific services, to each other. Progressing reconciliation, truth telling and healing.



# What is a Reconciliation Action Plan and why do we need one?

In 2020, Council consulted with members of the local First Nations communities as part of the Knox Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Needs Analysis. A key recommendation was to develop a Reconciliation Action Plan.

Reconciliation Action Plans (RAPs) are developed and monitored within a framework supplied by Reconciliation Australia, the lead body for reconciliation nationally.

“Based around the core pillars of **relationships, respect** and **opportunities**, RAPs provide tangible and substantive benefits for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Nations, increasing economic equity and supporting First Nations self-determination.”

*Reconciliation Australia*

A RAP is a commitment to taking meaningful, accountable action to advance reconciliation. Over 2000 organisations and businesses across Australia have a RAP, including 52 councils.

As the level of government closest to communities, councils are well-placed to lead and influence positive changes to strengthen relationships that will benefit everyone. This includes the local and regional communities.

It is also important to acknowledge that non-Aboriginal staff have a real opportunity to reflect on their understanding of and attitudes towards First Nations peoples by actively supporting this work. Relationships built through this process can become one of the most enduring outcomes of the RAP and enable actions and commitments to be effectively implemented to empower First Nations peoples.

For the First Nations communities it is central that Council understand and acknowledge the opportunities, strengths, needs, barriers and challenges and commit to moving forward and walking together.

## Our Business

The City of Knox is located approximately 25 kilometres south-east of the Melbourne CBD and is home to an estimated 160,000 residents and 58,965 households, with an average of 27% of people born overseas with English as a second language. Council employs over 1,000 staff with one customer service centre and staff located at numerous Council-owned and operated facilities throughout the City of Knox.

Currently, the number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff employed at Knox is four officers.

The City of Knox includes the suburbs of Bayswater, Boronia, Ferntree Gully, Upper Ferntree Gully, Knoxfield, Lysterfield, Rowville, Scoresby, The Basin, Wantirna and Wantirna South.

# First Nations are an important part of Knox's past, present and future

Knox City Council is home to places of historical significance to the Kulin Nation, which is a nation of Aboriginal Tribes with territory extending across Victoria and beyond. For thousands of years the creeks, hills and plains now known as the City of Knox have been cared for by the Traditional Custodians.

Important cultural and historical sites within Knox hold both the Traditional Knowledge of the First Peoples and the traumatic stories of colonisation. Cultural sites in Knox include campsites, stone tools, scar trees, travelling routes, and song lines that would have been a place of meeting between the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung and Bunurong people before settlement.

Within the City of Knox are three historic Aboriginal places, two of which are campsites in the general area of the registered historic Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung campsites, and the other a travelling route:

- Corhanworrabul No.1 Camp;
- The Basin Camps; and
- Ferntree Gully to Monbulk Travelling Route.

Monbulk, which lies outside of Knox, was a ceremonial place and neutral ground for Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung and Bunurong people. The travelling route located within Knox, may have also linked the Dandenong Police Paddocks, through Lysterfield and Churchill National Park, and the Native Police Headquarters in Narre Warren.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in the City of Knox today come from a variety of different Nations within Australia, including our Traditional Custodians and Stolen Generation.

Within Australia, First Nations share the commonality of health and wellbeing inequalities, despite being culturally and geographically diverse. Federal, State and Local governments recognise that there are long-lasting, far reaching and intergenerational consequences of colonisation and dispossession. The establishment of laws, policies, systems and structures explicitly excluded Aboriginal peoples, resulting in and entrenching systemic and structural racism.

Despite the past and present impacts of historical decisions, Aboriginal peoples, families and communities remain strong and resilient. The practices of the oldest living cultures and the contributions of Aboriginal peoples, local Elders and communities of Victoria continue to enrich Australian society.



# First Nations Knox - 2021 Census

Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander People in Knox

**38% INCREASE  
IN POPULATION  
2016-2021**

Knox has the 2nd largest First Nations population in the East of Melbourne.

**1022**

FIRST NATIONS RESIDENTS  
**0.6% OF KNOX**  
50% MALE  
50% FEMALE

**YOUNG ADULTS  
ACCOUNT FOR**

**23.1%**

OF FIRST NATIONS KNOX

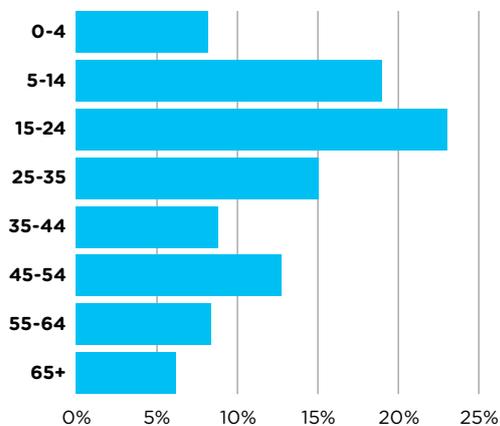
## Comparisons to Consider

FIRST NATIONS KNOX		NON INDIGENOUS KNOX	
Median Age	<b>25</b>	Median Age	<b>40</b>
One Parent Family	<b>32.1%</b>	One Parent Family	<b>14.6%</b>
Renting	<b>49.6%</b>	Renting	<b>21.3%</b>
Left School before Yr11	<b>39%</b>	Left School before Yr11	<b>22.5%</b>

### Knox First Nations residents compared to First Nations Victorian overall have

- Higher Secondary, Vocational Education and University attendance.
- More Young Adults 23.1% vs 18.2%
- Lower divorce and separation but higher widowed population.

### Age Groups



### Top Suburbs



Source: Census 2021, Australian Bureau Statistics

# Our RAP Journey

## Snapshot of Knox's key achievements leading up the RAP

1997

Council becomes a member of the Inter-Council Aboriginal Consultative Committee.

2003

Community members establish the Towards Reconciliation At Knox Group.

2004

Council adopts the Acknowledgement of the Traditional Custodians Policy. Acknowledgement of Country included on our gateway signage and documents.

2005

First annual Sorry Day ceremony.

2007

Council commences flying the Aboriginal flag at the Knox Civic Centre permanently, and the Torres Strait Islander flag on Sorry Day, Reconciliation Week and NAIDOC Week.

2008 to 2023

Knox City Council implements and continues with the following activities:

- Permanently flying Aboriginal Flag at Civic Centre and the Torres Strait Islander flag on Sorry Day, Reconciliation Week and NAIDOC Week.
- Acknowledgment of Country plaques installed at key Council facilities.
- Holding annual Sorry Day ceremonies, Reconciliation and NAIDOC week events.
- Acknowledgment of Traditional Custodians included at Council meetings, in Council documents and reports, Welcome to Country included at functions and events.

2018

Aboriginal Heritage Scoping Study complete.

2020

Council employs First Nations Lead Officer.

Council presents Community Cultural Education sessions.

2021

Council adopts the 2020 -Knox Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Needs Analysis report and Action Plan.

Council formally announces an intention to promote a “whole of business” mindset, moving forward in its acknowledgement and respect of First Nations.

Acknowledgement of Country included on Council email signatures.

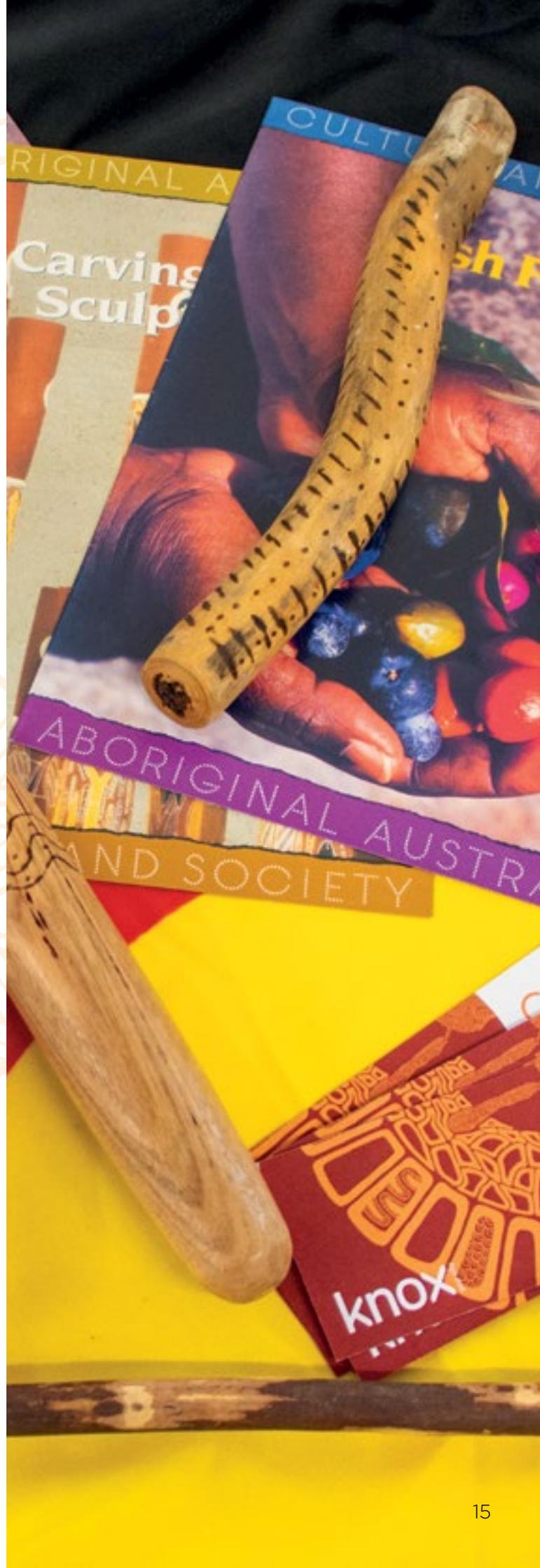
The Council and Community plans (2021-2025) include a strategy to “Honour and integrate First Peoples cultures into actions and environments.

2022

First Nations E-Newsletter commences for community.

Yarning Circle space established at the Civic Centre.

Council commences permanently flying the Torres Strait Islander flag at the Civic Centre.



## RAP Working Group

In early 2022, Council convened a RAP Working Group that included Elders, local Aboriginal Leaders, Traditional Owners and representatives from Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations.

The members of this Group generously gave their time and expertise to guide the development of the RAP and advise on the preferred process for First Nations communities conversations with Council staff and the wider communities.

The Group also held discussions on important local considerations related to Country, cultures and governance. This was to ensure the RAP acknowledged both Wurundjeri Woi wurrung and Bunurong Traditional Owners and included actions that supported a pathway to enable them to speak for Country.

Ongoing, the Reconciliation Action Plan Working Group will include key Council officers and a representative of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community in Knox.

Membership includes:

- First Nations Lead, Knox City Council
- Coordinator Healthy and Safe Communities, Knox City Council
- Coordinator Biodiversity, Knox City Council
- Coordinator Arts and Cultural Services, Knox City Council
- Coordinator Strategic Planning, Knox City Council
- People and Culture Lead, Knox City Council
- Manager Family and Children's Services, Knox City Council
- Andrew Peters, local Aboriginal Leader

The RAP Champion is the Director Connected Communities, Knox City Council.



## Community Conversations

In October 2022, members from the First Nations communities gathered at the Knox Civic Centre to discuss what was important to include in the RAP to progress reconciliation and truth telling in Knox. Twenty-six local people attended with family connections to Yarra Tribe, Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung, Bunurong, Marra mob, Peeraper, Palawa, Gamilaraay, Yorta, Worimi, Bardi, Ngarrindjeri, and Kurna/Narrunga mobs.

Conversations centered on the mandatory RAP actions and highlighted emerging issues that were important to communities. The First Nations communities were clear about what a successful RAP should deliver, including:

- An increase in cultural safety and pride;
- Care for Country;
- Listening to the voice of the First Nations communities; and
- Accountability and tangible progress.

## Council Staff Forum

In November 2022, 45 Council staff attended a forum to hear what the First Nations said in the community conversations, discuss and contribute to shaping the RAP actions, and reflect on how a RAP could enhance their work and relationship with the First Nations communities.

## Executive and Councillors Discussion

In February 2023, Council's Executive Management Team and Councillors met to consider how to best champion and enable implementation of key priorities.

Our conversations captured the voices of many to inform the actions in this RAP. The next steps require collaboration, partnerships and respect between First Nations communities, Council and the wider community to deliver this work.

# RAP Framework

The development of an Innovate RAP is an important step in Council's reconciliation journey and builds on the work already achieved through the 2020 Knox Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Needs Analysis and Action Plan. The implementation of this work focused on our commitment to progress reconciliation and Truth Telling. The Innovate RAP enables us to continue to build on and strengthen this groundwork before progressing to the next RAP level.

Reconciliation Australia provides a framework for organisations to develop a structured approach to work towards reconciliation. The four RAP types are:

- Reflect (getting started);
- Innovate (developing and strengthening relationships);
- Stretch (embedding reconciliation); and
- Elevate (leadership to advance reconciliation).

Each type sets out the minimum elements required to build strong relationships, respect and opportunities within the organisation and community.

## **Council's first RAP is aiming for the Innovate RAP.**

An Innovate RAP runs for two years, and focuses on:

- Developing and strengthening relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities;
- Engaging staff and stakeholders in reconciliation activities and projects; and
- Developing and piloting innovative strategies to empower Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

The RAP also includes mandatory Reconciliation Australia actions developed in line with a national vision for reconciliation. The mandatory actions will also ensure we are meeting the standards for accreditation to deliver tangible outcomes for local First Nations.

# RAP Focus Areas

The RAP has six Focus Areas, which were developed in the lead-up conversations and research in 2021.

The Focus Areas guided the structure of our conversations with communities and staff in 2022 and underpin the way we will work to achieve the goals.

The Focus Areas are:



## 1. Recognition and Respect

Respect and recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and their cultures increases everyone's awareness and appreciation of cultures and civilisation enriching our histories for at least 65,000 years.



## 2. Cultural Heritage

Access to land and protection of cultural heritage. Country plays a significant role in Aboriginal cultures, there are many places that tell stories of events and practices within the landscape.



## 3. Health and Wellbeing

For the health and wellbeing of the Knox Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities to flourish initiatives must include a holistic, whole of life cycle view of health that includes physical, cultural, spiritual, emotional, economic (including housing) and mental health and wellbeing.



## 4. Civic Participation

Effective civic participation can be achieved when all members of the communities feel valued, safe and recognised.



## 5. Employment and Economic Development

Employment and economic development is essential to start bridging the gap of inequality between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal peoples. Adequate employment is a key to health and wellbeing in any community.



## 6. Voice and Governance

A successful RAP listens to the First Nations communities and ensures the actions are delivered.

# Strategic Alignment

The RAP aligns with the Knox Community Plan (2021-2031) and Council Plan (2021-2025), which includes a commitment to progress positive outcomes for the Knox Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.

The Plan includes Key Directions for “Connection, resilience and wellbeing” to “Honour and integrate First Peoples Cultures into actions and environments.” by “working in partnership with local First Nations, relevant services and key networks to progress Reconciliation.” In committing to a partnership approach Council aims to “Work with First Nations organisations to ensure positive health and wellbeing outcomes for Kulin Country and the Knox Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community.”

The RAP also aligns with the Knox Connection, Access, Respect, Equality and Safety Strategy 2022-2027, which focuses directly on supporting and working alongside the First Nations communities and based on the principles of access, equity, rights and participation.

## Council’s Role in delivering this Plan:

**We will Partner:** with First Nations Leaders, local communities, businesses and Traditional Owners to develop trusted relationships to seek positive and lasting health and wellbeing outcomes.

**We will Advocate:** to raise awareness of local First Nations issues and needs and to support activities that promote safer and inclusive communities.

**We will Plan:** to ensure that we can deliver on actions that are important to the First Nations communities related to Country, Culture and Connection.

**We will Educate:** the wider communities and ourselves to increase understanding, respect and relationships with First Nation peoples and Country.

**We will Research:** to ensure that we deliver sustainable and supported evidence based projects and decision making.

**We will Provide:** opportunities and activities that support the aspirations and goals of First Nations.

# How will we know we are on track?

The RAP is a two-year plan and it is important that Council demonstrates progress and accountability to the communities.

Council's Community Wellbeing Department will have leadership and oversight for implementation and reporting on the RAP. We will develop an evaluation framework to monitor the impact of our work and to track progress.

A RAP Working Group that includes related Council Staff and First Nations Leaders will guide and monitor the delivery of this work.

## Monitoring progress and change

Council will:

- ✔ Nominate a senior staff representative as the RAP Champion;
- ✔ Host two First Nations community forums a year to report our progress and to hear current topics of interest to the community; and
- ✔ Meet with the Reconciliation Working Group four times per year to drive and monitor RAP implementation.

## Achieving Targets

Council will:

- ✔ Report back to Reconciliation Australia annually via the RAP Impact Measurement Questionnaire;
- ✔ Report RAP progress to staff, senior leaders and Council, annually;
- ✔ Share our RAP progress with communities, annually;
- ✔ Prepare a final evaluation report for Council and Reconciliation Australia at the end of this Plan; and
- ✔ Investigate participating in Reconciliation Australia's biennial Workplace RAP Barometer.





# ACTIONS: RELATIONSHIPS

## Focus Area 1: Recognition and Respect

Respect and recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and their cultures increases everyone's awareness and appreciation of cultures and civilisation enriching our histories for at least 65,000 years.

*'It is important that our families feel safe to identify and publicly see Aboriginal Culture celebrated'*

First Nations Community Conversations 6 Oct 2022

# Focus Area 1: Recognition and Respect

What we will do (Action)	How we will do it (Deliverable)
<p><b>1</b> Establish and maintain mutually beneficial relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and organisations.*</p>	<p><b>1.1</b> Meet with local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and organisations to develop guiding principles for engagement.*</p> <hr/> <p><b>1.2</b> Include these principles in Council’s revised Community Engagement Policy.*</p>
<p><b>2</b> Build relationships through celebrating National Reconciliation Week (NRW).*</p>	<p><b>2.1</b> Circulate Reconciliation Australia’s NRW resources and reconciliation materials to our staff. *</p> <hr/> <p><b>2.2</b> Provide opportunities for the RAP Working Group to attend and participate in NRW events.</p> <hr/> <p><b>2.3</b> Promote and encourage staff and senior leaders to participate in at least one external event to recognise and celebrate NRW.*</p> <hr/> <p><b>2.4</b> Organise at least one Council NRW event each year.*</p> <hr/> <p><b>2.5</b> Register all our NRW events on Reconciliation Australia’s NRW website.*</p>

“\*” denotes Reconciliation Australia mandatory actions

**RESOURCES:**

**No impact** - this action can be integrated to existing business plan activities and doesn’t require separate resources

**Existing operational budget** - this action will require funding or staff time, but it is already accounted for in the relevant department’s budget

Council Plan Role and Theme	Responsibility	Resources / Timeline
<b>Partner</b> Civic engagement and integrity	First Nations Lead, Community Wellbeing	Existing operational budget - August, 2023
<b>Partner</b> Civic engagement and integrity	First Nations Lead, Community Wellbeing	Existing operational budget - August, 2023
<b>Educate</b> Connection, resilience and wellbeing	<b>Lead:</b> First Nations Lead, Community Wellbeing <b>Supported By:</b> Manager, Customer & Communications	No impact - 27 May - 3 June, 2023, annually
<b>Educate</b> Connection, resilience and wellbeing	First Nations Lead, Community Wellbeing	No impact - 27 May - 3 June, 2023, annually
<b>Educate</b> Connection, resilience and wellbeing	First Nations Lead, Community Wellbeing	No impact - 27 May - 3 June, 2023, annually
<b>Educate</b> Connection, resilience and wellbeing	First Nations Lead, Community Wellbeing	Existing operational budget - 27 May - 3 June, 2023, annually
<b>Educate</b> Connection, resilience and wellbeing	First Nations Lead, Community Wellbeing	No impact - May, annually

*Table continued on following page*

**Future Council budget initiative** - this action will be subject to future Council budget processes; external funding is unlikely

**External funding to be sought** - this action will not proceed unless external funding is gained

# Focus Area 1: Recognition and Respect

What we will do (Action)	How we will do it (Deliverable)
<b>3</b> Promote reconciliation to the wider communities, businesses and Council staff to increase cultural awareness and build respect.*	<b>3.1</b> Develop and implement a staff engagement strategy to raise awareness of reconciliation across our workforce.*
	<b>3.2</b> Communicate our commitment to reconciliation publicly.
	<b>3.3</b> Explore opportunities to positively influence external stakeholders to drive reconciliation outcomes.*
	<b>3.4</b> Collaborate with RAP organisations and other like-minded organisations to develop innovative approaches to advance reconciliation.*

“\*” denotes Reconciliation Australia mandatory actions

**RESOURCES:**

**No impact** - this action can be integrated to existing business plan activities and doesn't require separate resources

**Existing operational budget** - this action will require funding or staff time, but it is already accounted for in the relevant department's budget

Council Plan Role and Theme	Responsibility	Resources / Timeline
<p><b>Advocate</b> Opportunity and innovation</p>	<p><b>Lead:</b> First Nations Lead, Community Wellbeing</p> <p><b>Supported by:</b> Manager, Customer and Communications</p> <p>Manager, People Culture and Development</p>	<p>Existing operational budget - December, 2024</p>
<p><b>Advocate</b> Connection, resilience and wellbeing</p> <p><b>Partner</b> Civic engagement and Integrity</p>	<p><b>Lead:</b> Manager, Customer and Communications</p> <p><b>Supported by:</b> First Nations Lead, Community Wellbeing</p>	<p>No impact - ongoing, commenced June, 2023</p>
<p><b>Advocate</b> Connection, resilience and wellbeing</p> <p><b>Partner</b> Civic engagement and Integrity</p>	<p><b>Lead:</b> Manager, Customer and Communications</p> <p><b>Supported by:</b> First Nations Lead, Community Wellbeing</p>	<p>No impact - ongoing, commenced June, 2023</p>
<p><b>Partner</b> Connection, resilience and wellbeing</p>	<p>First Nations Lead, Community Wellbeing</p>	<p>Existing operational budget - June, 2024</p>

*Table continued on following page*

**Future Council budget initiative** - this action will be subject to future Council budget processes; external funding is unlikely

**External funding to be sought** - this action will not proceed unless external funding is gained

# Focus Area 1: Recognition and Respect

What we will do (Action)	How we will do it (Deliverable)
<p><b>4</b> Promote positive race relations through anti-discrimination strategies including ‘Racism Stops with Me’ campaign and Welcoming Cities.*</p>	<p><b>4.1</b> Conduct a review of HR policies and procedures to identify existing anti- discrimination provisions and future need.*</p> <hr/> <p><b>4.2</b> Engage with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff and/ or Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander advisors to consult on developing an anti-discrimination policy.*</p> <hr/> <p><b>4.3</b> Develop, implement, and communicate an anti-discrimination policy for our organisation.*</p> <hr/> <p><b>4.4</b> Educate senior leaders within Council on the effects of racism through Truth Telling, training and discussion with First Nations Lead.*</p>
<p><b>5</b> Participate in the Local Aboriginal Network (LAN) and the Outer Eastern Metropolitan Governance Committee (OEMGC).</p>	<p><b>5.1</b> Continue to participate as an active member of the Outer East LAN and Governance Committee to increase opportunities for First Nations programs and services to locate in Knox.</p> <hr/> <p><b>5.2</b> Collaborate on regional initiatives being undertaken as appropriate including the EMR Regional Inclusive Employment Program.</p>

“\*” denotes Reconciliation Australia mandatory actions

**RESOURCES:**

**No impact** - this action can be integrated to existing business plan activities and doesn’t require separate resources

**Existing operational budget** - this action will require funding or staff time, but it is already accounted for in the relevant department’s budget

Council Plan Role and Theme	Responsibility	Resources / Timeline
<b>Research</b> Opportunity and innovation	<b>Lead:</b> Manager, People, Culture & Development <b>Supported by:</b> First Nations Project Officer, Community Wellbeing	Existing operational budget – January, 2024
<b>Advocate</b> Connection, resilience and wellbeing	<b>Lead:</b> First Nations Officer, Community Wellbeing <b>Supported by:</b> Manager, People, Culture & Development	Existing operational budget – January, 2024
<b>Advocate</b> Connection, resilience and wellbeing	<b>Lead:</b> First Nations Officer, Community Wellbeing <b>Supported by:</b> Manager, Customer & Communications	Existing operational budget – June, 2024
<b>Educate</b> Opportunity and innovation	First Nations Lead, Community Wellbeing	No impact – ongoing, commenced June, 2023
<b>Partner</b> Civic engagement and Integrity	First Nations Lead, Community Wellbeing	No impact – ongoing, commenced June, 2023
<b>Partner</b> Connection, resilience and wellbeing	<b>Lead:</b> First Nations Lead, Community Wellbeing <b>Supported By:</b> Manager, People Culture & Development	No impact – ongoing, commenced June 2023

**Future Council budget initiative** – this action will be subject to future Council budget processes; external funding is unlikely

**External funding to be sought** – this action will not proceed unless external funding is gained





## ACTIONS: RESPECT

### Focus Area 2: Cultural Heritage

Access to Land and Protection of Cultural Heritage. Country plays a significant role in Aboriginal cultures, there are many places that tell stories of events and practices within the landscape.

***‘Caring for Country, access to Country, learning from Country and Cultural understanding of history and Culture’***

First Nations Community Conversations 6 Oct 2022

# Focus Area 2: Cultural Heritage

What we will do (Action)	How we will do it (Deliverable)
<p><b>6</b> Honour and integrate First Peoples Cultures into actions and environments</p>	<p><b>6.1</b> Work in partnership with First Nations organisations to promote positive health and wellbeing outcomes for Kulin country within Knox and the Knox Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.</p> <hr/> <p><b>6.2</b> Investigate physical ways to Acknowledge Country, with consideration for interpretive signage, design/art elements, murals, Yarning circles, language and Cultural Gardens in our parks, open space and reserves.</p> <hr/> <p><b>6.3</b> Explore opportunities to develop First Nations naming protocols for appropriate Council parks, open space, new roads and buildings, in consultation with Traditional Owners.</p>
<p><b>7</b> Increase understanding, value and recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Cultures, histories, knowledge and rights through cultural learning.*</p>	<p><b>7.1</b> Continue to provide a mix of face to face and online cultural education and cultural safety training in all areas of our business including Councilors and leadership (4 sessions per year).</p> <hr/> <p><b>7.2</b> Consult Traditional Owners and/or Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander advisors to inform the development of a cultural learning and safety programs for staff.*</p>

“\*” denotes Reconciliation Australia mandatory actions

**RESOURCES:**

**No impact** - this action can be integrated to existing business plan activities and doesn't require separate resources

**Existing operational budget** - this action will require funding or staff time, but it is already accounted for in the relevant department's budget

Council Plan Role and Theme	Responsibility	Resources / Timeline
<b>Partner</b> Connection, resilience and wellbeing	<b>Lead:</b> First Nations Lead, Community Wellbeing <b>Supported by:</b> Manager, Community Infrastructure Manager, City Futures	Existing operational budget - June, 2024
<b>Plan</b> Connection, resilience and wellbeing	<b>Lead:</b> Coordinator Healthy and Safe Communities, Community Wellbeing <b>Supported by:</b> Manager, Active and Creative Communities Manager, Community Infrastructure	Future Council budget initiative- December, 2024
<b>Plan</b> Connection, resilience and wellbeing	<b>Lead:</b> First Nations Lead, Community Wellbeing <b>Supported by:</b> Manager, Community Infrastructure Manager, Operations Manager, Active & Creative Communities	Existing operational budget June, 2025
<b>Provide</b> Opportunity and innovation	<b>Lead:</b> First Nations Lead, Community Wellbeing <b>Supported By:</b> Manager, People Culture & Development	Existing operational budget - June, 2024
<b>Partner</b> Civic engagement and integrity	First Nations Lead, Community Wellbeing	No impact - ongoing, commenced June 2023

*Table continued on following page*

**Future Council budget initiative** - this action will be subject to future Council budget processes; external funding is unlikely

**External funding to be sought** - this action will not proceed unless external funding is gained

## Focus Area 2: Cultural Heritage

### What we will do (Action)

**7** Increase understanding, value and recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Cultures, histories, knowledge and rights through cultural learning.\*

### How we will do it (Deliverable)

**7.3** Develop, implement, and communicate a cultural learning and safety strategy within the Knox City Council Learning Plan.\*

**7.4** Deliver cultural safety training for RAP Working Group staff and leadership team.\*

**7.5** Continue to provide cultural education opportunities for the wider community. (2 sessions per year).

**7.6** Promote and increase cultural understanding and histories for the wider community through Council communications channels.

**7.7** Continue to build understanding of First Nations services and histories in our Early Years Centers and youth programs, to build culturally safe and inclusive settings for families and children.

“\*” denotes Reconciliation Australia mandatory actions

#### RESOURCES:

**No impact** - this action can be integrated to existing business plan activities and doesn't require separate resources

**Existing operational budget** - this action will require funding or staff time, but it is already accounted for in the relevant department's budget

Council Plan Role and Theme	Responsibility	Resources / Timeline
<b>Educate</b> Opportunity and innovation	<b>Lead:</b> First Nations Lead, Community Wellbeing <b>Supported By:</b> Manager, People Culture & Development	Existing operational resources – December, 2024
<b>Provide</b> Opportunity and innovation	First Nations Lead, Community Wellbeing	No impact – December 2023
<b>Provide</b> Connection, resilience and wellbeing	First Nations Lead, Community Wellbeing	Existing operational budget – ongoing, November 2023, April 2024, November 2024 and April 2025.
<b>Partner</b> Opportunity and innovation	<b>Lead:</b> First Nations Lead, Community Wellbeing <b>Supported By:</b> Manager, Customer & Communications	No impact – ongoing, commenced June 2023
<b>Provide</b> Opportunity and innovation	<b>Lead:</b> Manager, Family and Children Services Manager, Community Access and Support <b>Supported By:</b> First Nations Lead, Community Wellbeing	Existing operational resources – ongoing, June 2025

*Table continued on following page*

**Future Council budget initiative** – this action will be subject to future Council budget processes; external funding is unlikely

**External funding to be sought** – this action will not proceed unless external funding is gained

# Focus Area 2: Cultural Heritage

What we will do (Action)	How we will do it (Deliverable)
<p><b>8</b> Increase capacity for protection and awareness of culturally significant sites and assets.</p>	<p><b>8.1</b> In consultation with Traditional Owners (Registered Aboriginal Parties) and First Peoples State Relations, explore opportunities to resource an Aboriginal Heritage/ Values study to inform management and planning.</p> <p>See Appendix 1 - Aboriginal Culture Heritage Act for further information about caring for Country.</p> <hr/> <p><b>8.2</b> Identify cultural heritage sites and assets within the Knox City Council to ensure appropriate management, protection and access.</p>
<p><b>9</b> Include First Nations community in emergency management planning.</p>	<p><b>9.1</b> Council staff will work to partner with key Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations.</p> <hr/> <p><b>9.2</b> Partner with key First Nations stakeholders in preparing for, responding to, and recovering from emergencies.</p>

“(\*)” denotes Reconciliation Australia mandatory actions

**RESOURCES:**

**No impact** - this action can be integrated to existing business plan activities and doesn't require separate resources

**Existing operational budget** - this action will require funding or staff time, but it is already accounted for in the relevant department's budget

Council Plan Role and Theme	Responsibility	Resources / Timeline
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**Research**  
Natural Environment and sustainability

**Lead:** Coordinator, Healthy and Safe Communities, Community Wellbeing  
**Supported by:** Manager, City Futures Manager, Community Infrastructure

External funding to be sought in March 2024

**Research**  
Natural Environment and sustainability

**Lead:** Manager, City Futures  
**Supported by:** Coordinator Healthy and Safe Communities, Community Wellbeing

External funding to be sought in June 2024

**Partner**  
Civic engagement and Integrity

**Lead:** Manager, Emergency Management  
**Supported By:** First Nations Lead, Community Wellbeing

No Impact - ongoing, June 2025

**Partner**  
Civic engagement and integrity

**Lead:** Manager, Emergency Management  
**Supported By:** First Nations Lead, Community Wellbeing

No Impact - ongoing, June 2025





## ACTIONS: RESPECT

### Focus Area 3: Health and Wellbeing

*‘For the health and wellbeing of the Knox Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community to flourish it must include a holistic, whole of life cycle view of health that includes physical, cultural, spiritual, emotional, economic and mental health and wellbeing.*

*A living Cultural services hub that is meets the needs of community delivered by Aboriginal organisations’*

First Nations Community Conversations 6 Oct 2022

# Focus Area 3: Health and Wellbeing

What we will do (Action)	How we will do it (Deliverable)
<p><b>10</b> Actively support and recognise the importance of Truth Telling and Treaty as a means of healing for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.</p>	<p><b>10.1</b> Include opportunities for Council staff to learn about Truth Telling and Treaty as part of the learning strategy outlined in Action 7.3.</p> <hr/> <p><b>10.2</b> Explore opportunities to resource an audit of significant sites, named places and markers related to First Nations histories and colonisation in Knox, to inform the Truth Telling process.</p>
<p><b>11</b> Explore the establishment of a First Nations Hub and Cultural Centre.</p>	<p><b>11.1</b> Investigate appropriate sites and source funding opportunities in consultation with the RAP Working Group to establish a First Nations Hub and Cultural Centre.</p> <hr/> <p><b>11.2</b> Partner with First Nations community to consider First Nations specific services, opportunities for cultural education and local employment.</p>
<p><b>12</b> Advocate for increased local services and supports to be offered in Knox City Council to meet Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander resident needs.</p>	<p><b>12.1</b> With respect for self-determination, Council will work with regional Aboriginal Community Controlled services and the Outer East Melbourne Area Aboriginal Governance Committee to encourage more Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander services and supports to be located in Knox.</p> <hr/> <p><b>12.2</b> Investigate opportunities to host and promote specific services for the First Nations community in Knox.</p>

“(\*)” denotes Reconciliation Australia mandatory actions

**RESOURCES:**

**No impact** - this action can be integrated to existing business plan activities and doesn't require separate resources

**Existing operational budget** - this action will require funding or staff time, but it is already accounted for in the relevant department's budget

Council Plan Role and Theme	Responsibility	Resources / Timeline
<b>Educate</b> Connection, resilience and wellbeing	First Nations Lead, Community Wellbeing	No Impact - December 2024
<b>Research</b> Connection, resilience and wellbeing	Coordinator Healthy and Safe Communities, Community Wellbeing	External funding to be sought in Nov 2024
<b>Plan</b> Neighbourhoods, housing and infrastructure	Coordinator Healthy and Safe Communities, Community Wellbeing	External funding to be sought in March 2024
<b>Plan</b> Neighbourhoods, housing and infrastructure	Coordinator Healthy and Safe Communities, Community Wellbeing	External funding to be sought in February 2024
<b>Partner</b> Opportunity and innovation	First Nations Lead, Community Wellbeing	Existing operational budget - June 2025
<b>Partner</b> Opportunity and innovation	First Nations Lead, Community Wellbeing	Existing operational budget - June 2025

**Future Council budget initiative** - this action will be subject to future Council budget processes; external funding is unlikely

**External funding to be sought** - this action will not proceed unless external funding is gained





## ACTIONS: RESPECT

### Focus Area 4: Civic Participation

Effective civic participation can be achieved when all members of the community feel valued, safe and recognised.

***‘Following Cultural protocols, celebrating Elders, Aboriginal leadership and Aboriginal survival’***

First Nations Community Conversations 6 Oct 2022

## Focus Area 4: Civic Participation

### What we will do (Action)

### How we will do it (Deliverable)

**13** Demonstrate respect to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples by observing cultural protocols.\*

**13.1** Develop, implement and communicate a cultural protocol document, including protocols for Welcome to Country and Acknowledgement of Country at the commencement of important meetings, Council documents and email signatures.\*

**13.2** Invite local Traditional Owners to provide a Welcome to Country or other appropriate cultural protocols at significant events each year.\*

**13.3** Continue to build knowledge and respect in relation to the purpose and significance behind cultural protocols for staff, including Acknowledgement of Country and Welcome to Country.\*

**13.4** Continue to permanently display the Aboriginal flag and Torres Strait Islander Flags at the Civic Centre.

**13.5** Incorporate elements of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and histories into Council's Citizenship Ceremonies. This could include static displays, recorded performances, anthem with Didgeridoo and cultural walks.

“\*” denotes Reconciliation Australia mandatory actions

#### RESOURCES:

**No impact** - this action can be integrated to existing business plan activities and doesn't require separate resources

**Existing operational budget** - this action will require funding or staff time, but it is already accounted for in the relevant department's budget

Council Plan Role and Theme	Responsibility	Resources / Timeline
<b>Educate</b> Connection, resilience and wellbeing	First Nations Lead, Community Wellbeing	No impact - December, 2023
<b>Partner</b> Connection, resilience and wellbeing	First Nations Lead, Community Wellbeing Whole of Council	Existing operational budget - June, 2025
<b>Provide</b> Civic engagement and Integrity	First Nations Lead, Community Wellbeing Whole of Council	No impact, ongoing, June 2025
<b>Educate</b> Connection, resilience and wellbeing	First Nations Lead, Community Wellbeing Governance	No Impact - ongoing, June, 2025
<b>Educate</b> Civic engagement and Integrity	<b>Lead:</b> Manager, Active and Creative Communities <b>Supported By:</b> Coordinator Healthy and Safe Communities, Community Wellbeing	Future budget initiatives - June, 2024

*Table continued on following page*

**Future Council budget initiative** - this action will be subject to future Council budget processes; external funding is unlikely

**External funding to be sought** - this action will not proceed unless external funding is gained

## Focus Area 4: Civic Participation

### What we will do (Action)

### How we will do it (Deliverable)

**14** Build respect for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and histories by celebrating NAIDOC Week.\*

**14.1** Provide opportunities for the RAP Working Group to participate in an external NAIDOC Week event.\*

**14.2** Review staff policies and procedures to remove barriers for staff to participate in NAIDOC Week events.\*

**14.3** Promote and encourage participation in external NAIDOC events to all staff.\*

“\*” denotes Reconciliation Australia mandatory actions

#### RESOURCES:

**No impact** - this action can be integrated to existing business plan activities and doesn't require separate resources

**Existing operational budget** - this action will require funding or staff time, but it is already accounted for in the relevant department's budget

Council Plan Role and Theme	Responsibility	Resources / Timeline
<p><b>Educate</b> Connection, resilience and wellbeing</p>	<p>First Nations Lead, Community Wellbeing</p>	<p>No impact - First week in July, annually</p>
<p><b>Partner</b> Connection, resilience and wellbeing</p>	<p><b>Lead:</b> First Nations Lead, Community Wellbeing <b>Supported By:</b> People Culture &amp; Development</p>	<p>No impact - ongoing, June 2025</p>
<p><b>Educate</b> Connection, resilience and wellbeing</p>	<p><b>Lead:</b> Manager, Customer &amp; Communications <b>Supported By:</b> First Nations Lead, Community Wellbeing</p>	<p>No impact- ongoing, first week in June, annually</p>





# ACTIONS: OPPORTUNITIES

## Focus Area 5: Employment and Economic Development

Employment and Economic Development is essential to start bridging the gap of inequality between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people. Adequate employment is a key to health and wellbeing in any community.

*‘Pathways of employment, procurement and opportunities for mob.’*

First Nations Community Conversations 6 Oct 2022

# Focus Area 5: Employment and Economic Development

What we will do (Action)	How we will do it (Deliverable)
<b>15</b> Improve employment outcomes by increasing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples recruitment, retention, and professional development.*	<b>15.1</b> Continue to collect data and build understanding of current First Nations staffing to inform future employment and professional development opportunities.*
	<b>15.2</b> Engage with First Nations staff to consult on the development of a recruitment, retention and professional development strategy to be incorporated in a revised Knox City Council Workforce Plan.*
	<b>15.3</b> Develop and implement a First Nations recruitment, retention and professional development strategy incorporated in Knox City Council Workforce Plans.*
	<b>15.4</b> Advertise job vacancies to effectively reach First Nations community in Knox.*
	<b>15.5</b> Review Council recruitment procedures and policies to identify areas that will increase support and attraction of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander participation in our workplace.*

“\*” denotes Reconciliation Australia mandatory actions

**RESOURCES:**

**No impact** - this action can be integrated to existing business plan activities and doesn't require separate resources

**Existing operational budget** - this action will require funding or staff time, but it is already accounted for in the relevant department's budget

Council Plan Role and Theme	Responsibility	Resources / Timeline
<b>Research</b> Opportunity and innovation	<b>Lead:</b> Manager, People Culture & Development <b>Supported By:</b> First Nations Lead, Community Wellbeing	No Impact - June, 2025
<b>Partner</b> Opportunity and innovation	<b>Lead:</b> Manager, People Culture & Development <b>Supported By:</b> First Nations Lead, Community Wellbeing	Existing operation budget - December, 2023
<b>Plan</b> Opportunity and innovation	<b>Lead:</b> Manager, People Culture & Development <b>Supported By:</b> First Nations Lead, Community Wellbeing	Existing operational Budget - December, 2024
<b>Provide</b> Opportunity and innovation	Manager, People Culture & Development	No impact - ongoing, June, 2025
<b>Research</b> Opportunity and innovation	<b>Lead:</b> Manager, People Culture and Development <b>Supported By:</b> First Nations Lead, Community Wellbeing	Existing operational budget - December, 2023

*Table continued on following page*

**Future Council budget initiative** - this action will be subject to future Council budget processes; external funding is unlikely

**External funding to be sought** - this action will not proceed unless external funding is gained

# Focus Area 5: Employment and Economic Development

What we will do (Action)	How we will do it (Deliverable)
<p><b>16</b> Increase Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander supplier diversity to support improved economic and social outcomes.*</p>	<p><b>16.1</b> Incorporate First Nations procurement of goods and services as an option aligned with our Procurement Policy.*</p>
	<p><b>16.2</b> Investigate membership of Supply Nation and Kinaway to encourage procurement through First Nations businesses locally and more broadly.*</p> <p>Note: Supply Nation-Victorian Aboriginal Business Directory is a database of verified Indigenous businesses. Kinaway (Aboriginal Chamber of Commerce) - provide a directory of First Nations businesses including advice and support to strengthen Indigenous business opportunities.</p>
	<p><b>16.3</b> Increase the representation of artworks in the Knox Civic Art Collection by Victorian based First Nations artists, with preference for Wurundjeri and Bunurong artworks.</p>
	<p><b>16.4</b> Develop and communicate opportunities for procurement of goods and services from First Nations businesses to staff.*</p>
	<p><b>16.5</b> Review and update procurement practices to remove barriers to procuring goods and services from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander businesses.*</p>
	<p><b>16.6</b> Investigate and advocate opportunities to develop commercial relationships with First Nations businesses.*</p>

“\*” denotes Reconciliation Australia mandatory actions

**RESOURCES:**

**No impact** - this action can be integrated to existing business plan activities and doesn't require separate resources

**Existing operational budget** - this action will require funding or staff time, but it is already accounted for in the relevant department's budget

Council Plan Role and Theme	Responsibility	Resources / Timeline
<p><b>Research</b> Connection, resilience and wellbeing</p>	<p><b>Lead:</b> Manager, Strategic Procurement and Property</p> <p><b>Supported By:</b> First Nations Lead, Community Wellbeing</p>	<p>No impact - ongoing, June 2025</p>
<p><b>Research</b> Opportunity and innovation</p>	<p><b>Lead:</b> Manager, Strategic Procurement and Property</p> <p><b>Supported By:</b> Coordinator Healthy and Safe Communities, Community Wellbeing</p>	<p>Future Council budget initiative - July 2024</p>
<p><b>Advocate</b> Connection, resilience and wellbeing</p>	<p>Manager, Active and Creative Communities</p>	<p>Future budget initiative - July 2024</p>
<p><b>Educate</b> Opportunity and innovation</p>	<p><b>Lead:</b> Manager, Strategic Procurement and Property</p> <p><b>Supported By:</b> First Nations Lead, Community Wellbeing</p>	<p>No impact - December, 2023</p>
<p><b>Research</b> Opportunity and innovation</p>	<p><b>Lead:</b> Manager, Strategic Procurement and Property</p> <p><b>Supported By:</b> First Nations Lead, Community Wellbeing</p>	<p>No impact- August, 2023</p>
<p><b>Advocate</b> Connection, resilience and wellbeing</p>	<p>First Nations Lead, Community Wellbeing</p>	<p>No impact - June, 2025</p>

**Future Council budget initiative** - this action will be subject to future Council budget processes; external funding is unlikely

**External funding to be sought** - this action will not proceed unless external funding is gained





## ACTIONS: GOVERNANCE

### **Focus Area 6: Voice and Governance**

A successful RAP listens to the First Nations community and ensures the actions are delivered.

***‘A strong Aboriginal voice in community  
and council’***

First Nations Community Conversations 6 Oct 2022

## Focus Area 6: Voice and Governance

What we will do (Action)	How we will do it (Deliverable)
<p><b>17</b> Establish and maintain an effective RAP Working group (RWG) to drive governance of the RAP.*</p>	<p><b>17.1</b> Establish and coordinate a RAP Working Group (RWG) to monitor and guide the implementation of the RAP. The Group will include relevant Council Staff and member of leadership group.*</p> <hr/> <p><b>17.2</b> Maintain Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander representation on the RAP working group.</p> <hr/> <p><b>17.3</b> Establish a Terms of Reference for the RWG to provide advice and guidance and ensure key actions are appropriately resourced.*</p> <hr/> <p><b>17.4</b> Meet at least four times per year to drive and monitor RAP implementation.*</p>
<p><b>18</b> Provide appropriate support for effective implementation of RAP commitments.*</p>	<p><b>18.1</b> Engage our senior leaders and other staff in the delivery of RAP commitments.*</p> <hr/> <p><b>18.2</b> Include RAP actions on Council Corporate Reporting system (Pulse) to track, measure and report on RAP commitments.*</p> <hr/> <p><b>18.3</b> Nominate and maintain an internal RAP Champion from senior management.*</p>

“\*” denotes Reconciliation Australia mandatory actions

### RESOURCES:

**No impact** - this action can be integrated to existing business plan activities and doesn't require separate resources

**Existing operational budget** - this action will require funding or staff time, but it is already accounted for in the relevant department's budget

Council Plan Role and Theme	Responsibility	Resources / Timeline
<b>Partner</b> Civic engagement and integrity	First Nations Lead, Community Wellbeing	Existing operational budget - December, 2023
<b>Partner</b> Civic engagement and integrity	First Nations Lead, Community Wellbeing	Existing operational budget - December, 2023
<b>Regulate</b> Civic engagement and integrity	First Nations Lead, Community Wellbeing	No impact - December, 2023
<b>Partner</b> Civic engagement and integrity	First Nations Lead, Community Wellbeing	No impact - August 2023 then quarterly until June 2025
<b>Advocate</b> Connection, resilience and wellbeing	First Nations Lead, Community Wellbeing	No impact - August, 2023
<b>Regulate</b> Civic engagement and Integrity	First Nations Lead, Community Wellbeing	No impact - December, 2023
<b>Advocate</b> Civic engagement and integrity	First Nations Lead, Community Wellbeing	No impact - August, 2023

*Table continued on following page*

**Future Council budget initiative** - this action will be subject to future Council budget processes; external funding is unlikely

**External funding to be sought** - this action will not proceed unless external funding is gained

## Focus Area 6: Voice and Governance

What we will do (Action)	How we will do it (Deliverable)
<b>19</b> Build accountability and transparency through reporting RAP achievements, challenges and learnings both internally and externally.*	<b>19.1</b> Maintain current contact details with Reconciliation Australia to ensure we do not miss out on important RAP correspondence.*
	<b>19.2</b> Register with Reconciliation Australia to complete and submit the annual RAP Impact Measurement Questionnaire to Reconciliation Australia.*
	<b>19.3</b> Annually report RAP progress to all staff and senior leaders.*
	<b>19.4</b> Annually report our RAP achievements, challenges and learnings to communities, including ongoing feedback.*
	<b>19.5</b> Investigate participating in Reconciliation Australia's biennial Workplace RAP Barometer.*
	<b>19.6</b> Submit a traffic light report to Reconciliation Australia at the conclusion of this RAP.*
<b>20</b> Continue our reconciliation journey by developing our next RAP.*	<b>20.1</b> Register via Reconciliation Australia's website to begin developing our next RAP.*
<b>21</b> Create a First Nations 'consultative group' to guide the broader work of Council.	<b>21.1</b> Explore membership and the creation of a First Nations 'consultative group' or advisory committee to include nominated Councillors.
<b>22</b> Host First Nations Voice Forums to facilitate deep listening by Councilors and leadership.	<b>22.1</b> Host two public First Nations forums a year to enable Councillors and leadership to hear current topics of interest from the community.
<b>23</b> Investigate embedding First Nations commitments beyond the RAP.	<b>23.1</b> Work with community to develop statements that outline Council's role in challenging racism and promoting inclusion that support, empower and protect First Nations and Country in Knox.

“\*” denotes Reconciliation Australia mandatory actions

### RESOURCES:

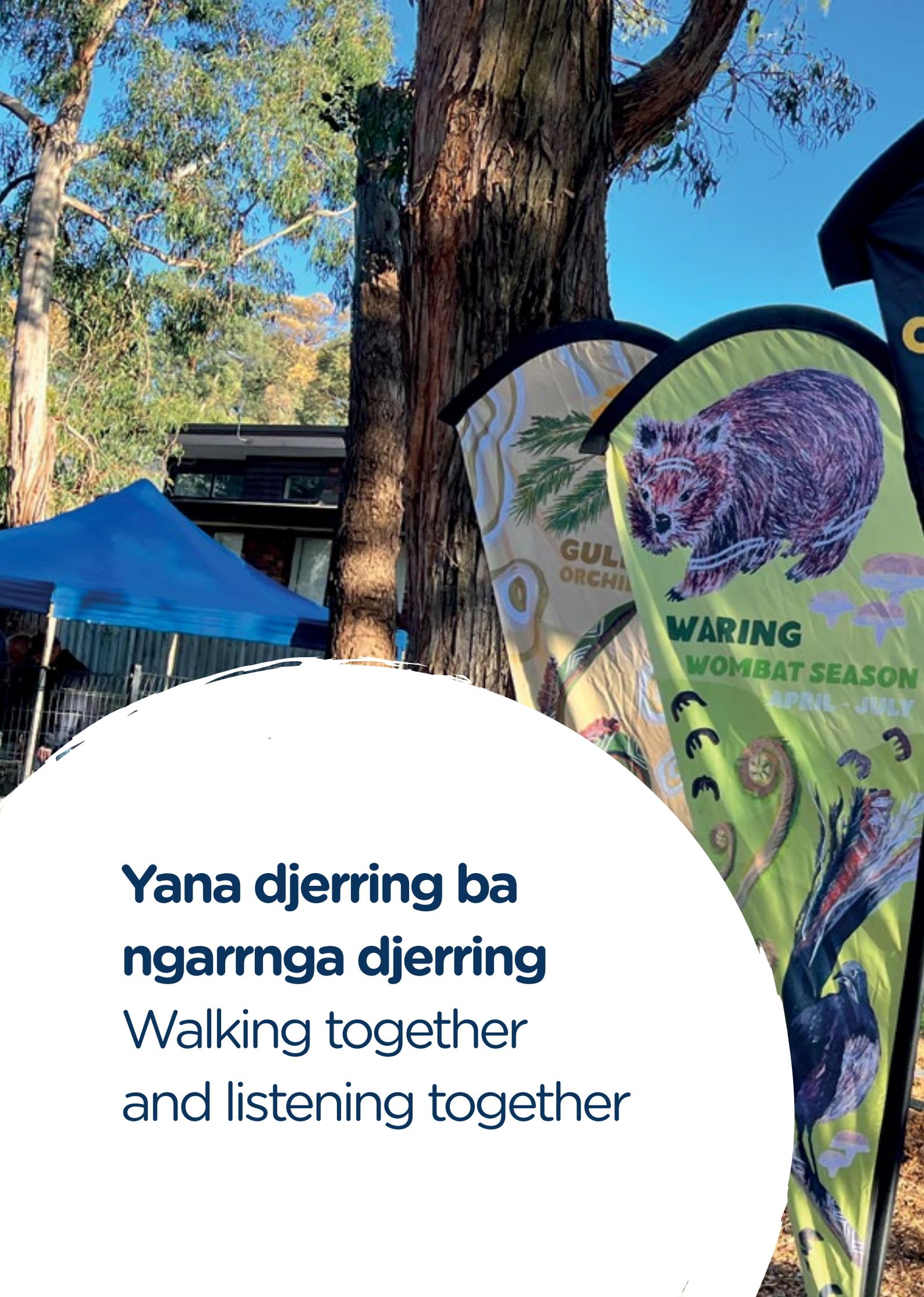
**No impact** - this action can be integrated to existing business plan activities and doesn't require separate resources

**Existing operational budget** - this action will require funding or staff time, but it is already accounted for in the relevant department's budget

Council Plan Role and Theme	Responsibility	Resources / Timeline
<b>Partner</b> Civic engagement and integrity	First Nations Lead, Community Wellbeing	No impact - June 2023, annually
<b>Partner</b> Civic engagement and integrity	First Nations Lead, Community Wellbeing	No impact - 30 September, 2023, annually
<b>Regulate</b> Civic engagement and integrity	First Nations Lead, Community Wellbeing	No impact - June, 2025
<b>Regulate</b> Connection, resilience and wellbeing	<b>Lead:</b> First Nations Lead, Community Wellbeing <b>Supported By:</b> Manager, Customer & Communications	No impact - June, 2025
<b>Research</b> Connection, resilience and wellbeing	First Nations Lead, Community Wellbeing	No impact - May, 2024
<b>Regulate</b> Civic engagement and Integrity	First Nations Lead, Community Wellbeing	Existing operational budget - June, 2025
<b>Partner</b> Civic engagement and Integrity	First Nations Lead, Community Wellbeing	No impact - June, 2025
<b>Partner</b> Civic engagement and Integrity	First Nations Lead, Community Wellbeing	Future Council budget initiative - July 2024
<b>Partner</b> Civic engagement and Integrity	First Nations Lead, Community Wellbeing	Existing operational budget - June, 2024
<b>Advocate</b> Civic engagement and Integrity	First Nations Lead, Community Wellbeing	Existing operational budget - December, 2023

**Future Council budget initiative** - this action will be subject to future Council budget processes; external funding is unlikely

**External funding to be sought** - this action will not proceed unless external funding is gained

A photograph of an outdoor event. In the foreground, a large white circle contains text. The background shows a large tree, a blue tent, and a banner with a wombat illustration and the text 'WOMBAT SEASON APRIL - JULY'.

**Yana djerring ba  
ngarrnga djerring**  
Walking together  
and listening together

We are  
proudly helping  
care for **Country**  
across the  
**Kulin Nation**



# Broader Policy Context

## The Victorian Aboriginal and Local Government Strategic Framework 2021-2026

“The Strategy doesn’t replace Council plans or RAPs. Instead, the Strategy is a reference document, helping councils crosscheck, progress, and evolve existing plans and RAPs. It will also help councils identify additional actions to help meet their commitments and progress towards self-determination.”

Seven Strategic Pillars	Outcomes	To Succeed, We must:
<p><b>Culture, respect and trust</b></p>	<p>Genuine partnerships between Aboriginal Victorians, local councils, and the Victorian Government that celebrate, understand, and embed Aboriginal cultural heritages and foster trust and respect.</p>	<p>Create and maintain broad awareness, understanding, and embedding of Aboriginal cultures fostering continual reflection.</p> <hr/> <p>Celebrate and embed Aboriginal cultures, languages, and customs in local businesses.</p> <hr/> <p>Empower Aboriginal Victorians and local councils to tackle discrimination and racism together through shared understanding, truth, respect, and care.</p>
<p><b>Awareness and engagement</b></p>	<p>Open, proactive, and ongoing dialogue between Aboriginal Victorians and local councils that is understanding, purposeful, meaningful, thoughtful, and mutually beneficial.</p>	<p>Ensure all parties working together know how to best apply the Strategy.</p> <hr/> <p>Share information and best practice efforts for all parties’ easy access.</p> <hr/> <p>Identify and enact regular communication and engagement opportunities between all parties.</p>
<p><b>Accountability and direction</b></p>	<p>Clarity and genuine ownership and accountability that recognises the critical role Aboriginal Victorians, local councils, and the Victorian Government each play in progressing self-determination.</p>	<p>Recognise Aboriginal Victorians, local councils, and the Victorian Government’s roles in progressing self-determination.</p> <hr/> <p>Enshrine shared purpose and ownership between all parties, clearly defining roles and responsibilities. Embed Aboriginal perspectives and participation in local council processes.</p> <hr/> <p>Develop a locally based, mutually agreed approach to shared reporting and accountability.</p>

Seven Strategic Pillars	Outcomes	To Succeed, We must:
<b>Governance and participation</b>	Aboriginal cultural values, voices, knowledge, and rights are embedded into the work local councils perform in creating vibrant local communities.	<p>Aboriginal cultural values, voices, knowledge, and rights are embedded into local councils' work.</p> <hr/> <p>Embed Aboriginal perspectives, goals and aspirations in local council processes.</p> <hr/> <p>Use self-determination principles to establish shared decision-making processes</p>
<b>Economic participation</b>	Aboriginal peoples are actively participating in the state economy through employment and business ventures.	<p>Procure the services of local Aboriginal businesses.</p> <hr/> <p>Increase the number of Aboriginal employees through career pathways that are diverse and inclusive, and that lead into senior positions with pay parity.</p> <hr/> <p>Remunerate Aboriginal Victorians for their expertise when engaging and partnering.</p>
<b>Health and Wellbeing</b>	Genuine partnerships between Aboriginal Victorians including the Aboriginal Community Controlled sector, local councils, regional self-determining structures including Dhelk Dja and the Victorian Government that improve the health and wellbeing outcomes of Aboriginal Victorians.	<p>Design local Aboriginal health and wellbeing policies and services in partnership with Traditional Owners, the Aboriginal Community Controlled sector, and Aboriginal communities.</p> <hr/> <p>Prioritise self-determined solutions that promote cultures, connection, and community strengthening.</p> <hr/> <p>Ensure the preservation of Aboriginal cultures by supporting Aboriginal Elders, and empowering the next generation of proud, strong, and thriving Aboriginal peoples to continue their cultures.</p>
<b>Resourcing and Funding</b>	Effective and sustainable funding models that support Aboriginal Victorians and local councils and enable the Strategy.	<p>Establish sustainable resourcing and funding models that encourage locally led collaboration, prioritisation, and resource sharing.</p>

# Appendix 1:

## Understanding Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Act and Caring for Country Fact Sheet

Understanding the Aboriginal Cultural heritage, histories and stories associated with Knox City Council gives an informed evidence base for future planning, protection and management of Country. The Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) actions related to cultural heritages and values assessments are required to be in-step with State legislation.

**More information can be found at: [www.firstNationsrelations.vic.gov.au/aboriginal-culture-and-heritage](http://www.firstNationsrelations.vic.gov.au/aboriginal-culture-and-heritage)**

### The Aboriginal Heritage Act and Aboriginal Heritage Regulations

The Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006 and Aboriginal Heritage Regulations 2018 provide for the protection and management of Aboriginal cultural heritages in Victoria.

### What are Aboriginal Historical Places?

Aboriginal people have lived in southern Australia, including what is now Victoria, for many thousands of years. During that time, they left physical evidence of their activities which now survive as cultural heritage sites or places. Examples include shell middens, scatters of stone artefacts, oven mounds, stone quarries, rock art sites, fish traps, scarred trees, stone arrangements and places of burial.

An Aboriginal historical place is a location that is important because of its associations with, and cultural significance to, Aboriginal people. Such places may or may not contain archaeological remains. For example, a historical place could include the foundations of a mission building, or a massacre site at which no physical remains survive.

Aboriginal Historical Places are identified through a range of sources including oral histories provided by Aboriginal peoples, references in historical records and information arising from archaeological investigations.

### Where do Aboriginal Historical Places occur?

There are Aboriginal Historical Places all over Victoria. They are most common near rivers, lakes, swamps and the coast. There may be places on your property.

### Are Aboriginal Historical Places protected?

All Aboriginal Historical Places and cultural places in Victoria are protected by law (the Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006). Aboriginal artefacts are also protected. It is against the law to disturb or destroy an Aboriginal place. Artefacts should not be removed from site.

### Why protect Aboriginal Historical Places?

Aboriginal Historical Places are a precious part of the heritage of the whole community. They are of immense cultural, scientific, educational and historic interest. Aboriginal heritage places provide Aboriginal people today with an important link to their cultures and their past.

Aboriginal places are also fragile. When they are destroyed or damaged, information about past cultural and environmental changes may be lost forever. In many cases, information about the past occupation of Australia can only be obtained through the archaeological investigation of these places.

### **If there is an Aboriginal Historical Place on my land, can it be subject to a Native Title Claim?**

Generally, no. Only vacant Crown land may be subject to a Native Title Claim. Freehold land, which is almost all private property, is not subject to native title claims even if Aboriginal Historical Places are present. In general, having Aboriginal cultural places on your land will not affect ownership, or stop existing land use from continuing.

### **What are threats to Aboriginal Historical Places?**

Erosion and other natural processes threaten some Aboriginal Historical Places. Human activities may also be a threat, particularly major changes to the way land is used, such as development.

### **Who is Responsible for Aboriginal Historical Places?**

First Peoples State Relations (formally Aboriginal Victoria) is the State Government agency which is responsible for Aboriginal places. First Peoples State Relations has a register of Aboriginal places, and records and protects places.

### **Planning and development of land**

The endurance of Aboriginal societies across Australia is of global significance and the cultural heritage places and objects associated with Aboriginal societies are a significant part of the heritage of all Australians. More importantly, they are a fundamental part of Aboriginal communities' life and cultural identities. The legislation provides protection for all Aboriginal places and objects regardless of their inclusion on the Victorian Aboriginal Heritage Register or whether they are located on public or private land.

Large developments and other high impact activities in culturally sensitive landscapes can cause significant harm to Aboriginal cultural heritage. In these situations, the Act may require the preparation of a Cultural Heritage

Management Plan or the planner or developer may need to get a cultural heritage permit.

The Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006 includes a range of enforcement provisions to provide better protection for Aboriginal cultural heritage in Victoria. These provide appropriate penalties and clear powers for Authorised Officers (AOs) and Aboriginal Heritage Officers (AHOs).

### **What is a Cultural Heritage Management Plan (CHMP)?**

A Cultural Heritage Management Plan (CHMP) is a written report prepared by a Heritage Advisor. It includes results of an assessment of the potential impact of a proposed activity on Aboriginal cultural heritages. It outlines measures to be taken before, during and after an activity in order to manage and protect Aboriginal cultural heritages in the activity area.

### **When is a CHMP required?**

A CHMP is required when a 'high impact activity' is planned in an area of 'cultural heritage sensitivity'. These terms are defined in the Aboriginal Heritage Regulations 2018.

In these circumstances, planning permits, licences and work authorities can't be issued unless a CHMP has been approved for the activity. Areas of cultural heritage sensitivity include registered Aboriginal cultural heritage places, as well as landforms and land categories that are generally regarded as more likely to contain Aboriginal cultural heritages: <https://www.firstnationsrelations.vic.gov.au/cultural-heritage-sensitivity>.

# Appendix 2: References

## Related Policy Framework:

### International

- UN Declaration of Human Rights
- UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Nations

### Australian Government

- Australia's Human Rights Framework
- Closing the Gap Strategy 2008

### Victorian Government

- Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006
- Equal Opportunity Act 2010
- Advancing the Treaty Process with Aboriginal Victorians Bill
- Victorian Aboriginal Affairs Framework 2018–2023
- Korin Balit-Djak: Aboriginal Health, Wellbeing and Safety Strategic Plan 2017–2027
- Aboriginal Family Violence 10-Year Plan 2016–2026
- Wungurilwil Gaggapduir: Aboriginal Children and Families Agreement and Strategic Action Plan
- Marrung Aboriginal Education Plan 2016–2026
- Balit Murrup: Aboriginal Social & Emotional Wellbeing Framework
- Aboriginal Justice Agreement
- Victorian Aboriginal Affairs Framework (VAAF) 2018–2023
- Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006 and 2016 amendment

## Local Government

- The Victorian Local Government Act 2020
- The Victorian Aboriginal and Local Government Strategic Framework 2021–2026
- Strategic Priorities of the Early Years Compact
- The Victorian Aboriginal and Local Government Action Plan 2017

## Knox City Council strategic plans

- Community Plan 2021–2031 and Council Plan 2021–2025
- Knox Connection, Access Respect Equality and Safety Strategy 2022–2027
- Child, Youth and Seniors Plan 2021–2025
- Gender Equality Action Plan 2021–2025
- Municipal Emergency Management Plan 2022–2025

## Knox City Council policies and procedures

- Acknowledgement of Traditional Owners Policy 2018–2021
- Plaque Inscription Policy 2003–2006
- Flying and Displaying of Flags Policy 2022–2025

## Knox City Council contact

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your city



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