



# Reflect

Reconciliation Action Plan December 2023 – December 2024

Surf Coast Shire Council



RECONCILIATION  
ACTION PLAN

REFLECT



# Acknowledgement

Surf Coast Shire Council Acknowledges the Wadawurrung People, and the Gulidjan and Gadubanud Peoples of the Eastern Maar, their Elders and leaders past, present and emerging as the Traditional Owners of the skies, land, waters and sea country across our municipality.

We acknowledge their care and custodianship for more than 60,000 years, which continues today.

We walk with them as we respectfully care for and tread lightly on these lands.

We also extend that respect to all First Nations people who are part of the community.



Torquay, Wadawurrung Country  
Photo courtesy of Avaiilla Group

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## DISCLAIMER

Every effort has been made to ensure the information in this document is true and correct at the time of publication.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people should be aware that this document may contain images and names of deceased persons.

# Koling Wada-Ngal

## Let us walk together

### Firstly, we would like to Acknowledge all Wadawurrung Traditional Owners, our Ancestors and pay respect to our Elders past, present and emerging.

We Acknowledge all Gadubanud and Gulidjan of Eastern Maar and all First Nations people who live across the municipality of the Surf Coast.

We are Wadawurrung People, We speak Wadawurrung Language.

*Wadawurrung* refers to 'Country of the people who belong to the Water'.

Wadawurrung Traditional Owners Aboriginal Corporation was appointed in May 2009 as a Registered Aboriginal Party under the Victorian Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006. The Corporation represents Wadawurrung Traditional Owners.

Our connection to Culture and Country continues to provide us with the obligation, responsibilities, and strength to care, connect, practice and pass on tens of thousands of years of knowledge, as Wadawurrung People.

Torquay was known as *Doonmarnwaring*, a place where the *warri* (salt water) and *lakorra* (clouds) meet.

Our names that traditionally belong to areas across the Surf Coast are:

- ❖ Point Impossible – *Kurrak Panyul* (sandhills)
- ❖ Bells Beach – *Djarrak* (arm)
- ❖ Point Addis – *Good-a-kut*
- ❖ Jan Juc – *Jan Jook* (wattle resin)

- ❖ Moriac – *Mor-ro-yok* (native raspberry bramble)
- ❖ Anglesea – *Kuarka-dorla* (place of fishing mullet)
- ❖ Thompsons Creek – *Pert Piang Yellami* (mullet creek)
- ❖ Deep Creek – *Merrin Kunnung* (valley of the stream)
- ❖ Modewarre (place of musk duck)

We hope one day to see the rightful names returned as we continue to work towards this with the Surf Coast Shire.

Wadawurrung knowledge, language and footprints have been embedded in these lands for tens of thousands of years. From our Ancestors who walked before us, our Elders of today, and continuing generations committed to our present and future.

We had two *Balug* clan groups in this area. The *Mon Mart* and *Tjuraltja* groups who were responsible for holding the knowledge and maintaining care of their *Balug* group and Country.

The boundary of the two groups was Deep Creek, its original name is *Merrin Kunnung*, meaning the valley of the stream.

We had many places of permanent living across our salt water Country, one of the largest living places was at Point Impossible. We have places of Women's Business. Places of Men's Business and places where we held *baierr* (a big gathering) where all would come here to this beautiful part of Wadawurrung Country.

We lived via cultural seasons. In our hot sun season many came here gathered, danced, traded and feasted on seafood, the Country told us time through the

change of season. This Country provided wealth and sustainability. The care our people gave is why we all get to enjoy and live on this Country today.

Caring for our Country, lands, skies, and waters, is our continual cultural practice, and core to our identity and connection as the Traditional Owners of Wadawurrung Country. Our people have endured trauma, violence and dispossession since invasion and have demonstrated an innate ability of resilience to continue their cultural practices which has provided the strength to ensure our survival.

In 2020 we released *Paleert Tjarra Dja (Let's Make Country Good Together)* our Wadawurrung Country Plan. A 10-year vision, 2020-2030 of the aspirations and goals of Wadawurrung people. This was achieved with Wadawurrung Elders and families of the many generations sharing knowledge through gatherings and collaboration together on Country.

The Plan provides a guidance for all stakeholders to embed into their responsibilities, Governance, and strategic planning to strengthen their relationships with Wadawurrung Traditional Owners Aboriginal Corporation. Wadawurrung people are committed to working together with key stakeholders like Surf Coast Shire Council to ensure we have strong partnerships, engagement, and collaboration to achieve our aspirations and goals, and that our living Cultural heritage, language, stories and Cultural values are protected, conserved and Wadawurrung people and Country is respected.

We look forward to continuing our partnership and presenting a voice for our Traditional Owners and the aspirations of the Country Plan with the endorsement of the Reconciliation Action Plan.

*Koling wada-ngal* (Let us walk together)

**Wadawurrung Traditional Owners Aboriginal Corporation**



# *Ngootyoon Meerreeng, Ngootyoon Maar* Healthy Country, Healthy People

**The Eastern Maar are a collective of several Indigenous language groups and their descending family groups that work together for the greater good of Meerreeng (Country).**

We acknowledge Eastern Maar Citizens: From Elders to infants. Those that have gone and those to come.

The Eastern Maar Aboriginal Corporation (EMAC) is the Prescribed Body Corporate and the Registered Aboriginal Party that represents the Cultural Obligations, Rights and Assertions of the Eastern Maar as described in the Country Plan *Meerreengeeye Ngakeepoorryeeyt* (Our Country, Far Seeing).

The Eastern Maar comprises five major Maar/Mara language groups, being Gulidjan, Gadubanud, Keeray, Djargurd and Dauwurd wurrung. Additionally, Eastern Maar include Djab Wurrung, a West Kulin speaking group.

Eastern Maar is our self-descriptive in context as outlined above. Maar/Mara is translated to the English word "People".

The Surf Coast Shire's Reflect Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) is a comprehensive piece of work and for what it is, should be commended.

Eastern Maar's position on RAPs, as previously stated does not favour RAPs over other policy and procedure works such as Aboriginal Employment strategies for example.

That said, the RAP as presented to us is good and we extend an invitation to Surf Coast Shire to continue working with the Eastern Maar Society to continue strengthening our relationship going forward.

***Ngootyoon Meerreeng, Ngootyoon Maar***  
(Healthy Country, Healthy People)

**Eastern Maar Aboriginal Corporation**



*Cumberland River, Gadubanud  
Country - Eastern Maar nation*



Wadawurrung woman Nikki McKenzie welcomes new Australian citizens to Country, accompanied by Kurnai/Wotjabaluk man Norm Jurrawaa Stanley, Council Chambers, Torquay, Wadawurrung Country

## Statement from Reconciliation Australia



### Reconciliation Australia welcomes Surf Coast Shire Council to the Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) program with the formal endorsement of its inaugural Reflect RAP.

Surf Coast Shire Council joins a network of more than 2,500 corporate, government, and not-for-profit organisations that have made a formal commitment to reconciliation through the RAP program.

Since 2006, RAPs have provided a framework for organisations to leverage their structures and diverse spheres of influence to support the national reconciliation movement. The program's potential for impact is greater than ever, with close to 3 million people now working or studying in an organisation with a RAP.

The four RAP types – Reflect, Innovate, Stretch and Elevate – allow RAP partners to continuously develop and strengthen reconciliation commitments in new ways. This Reflect RAP will lay the foundations, priming the workplace for future RAPs and reconciliation initiatives.

The RAP program's strength is its framework of relationships, respect, and opportunities, allowing an organisation to strategically set its reconciliation commitments in line with its own business objectives, for the most effective outcomes.

These outcomes contribute towards the five dimensions of reconciliation: race relations; equality and equity; institutional integrity; unity; and historical acceptance.

It is critical to not only uphold all five dimensions of reconciliation, but also increase awareness of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, histories, knowledge, and leadership across all sectors of Australian society.

This Reflect RAP enables Surf Coast Shire Council to deepen its understanding of its sphere of influence and the unique contribution it can make to lead progress across the five dimensions. Getting these first steps right will ensure the sustainability of future RAPs and reconciliation initiatives, and provide meaningful impact toward Australia's reconciliation journey.

Congratulations Surf Coast Shire Council, welcome to the RAP program, and I look forward to following your reconciliation journey in the years to come.

Karen Mundine  
Chief Executive Officer  
Reconciliation Australia



Worimi man, artist Gerard Black. Photo courtesy of Peter Foster

## About the artist and the artwork

Surf Coast Shire Council would like to acknowledge proud Worimi man and Surf Coast Shire resident Gerard Black, whose artwork appears on the cover and throughout this document. We thank Gerard for his ongoing support of Council's Reconciliation journey. A framed version of Gerard's artwork also hangs proudly in the foyer of the Surf Coast Shire Council offices in Torquay.

*"This artwork represents the journey of taking the first steps of Reconciliation and coming together as a community. This is shown by the footprints walking towards each other in the sand, sitting together, and having important conversations. It's about creating a safe place where we can share, communicate and learn from one another.*

*We become stronger together with knowledge, represented by the centre meeting place circles. I started the artwork by looking at a map of the Surf Coast and overlaid the work over the top. The work shows our beaches, ocean, farmlands, and forests.*

*Represented, are the ocean warriors from all parts of our community, who protect the sea and beaches. I have also portrayed the land warriors, who protect the grassy plains and beautiful forests.*

*I believe that at the heart of reconciliation lies the discovery that we all truly share the same common goal of protecting, healing, and connecting our Wadawurrung, Gulidjan and Gadabanud Countries. Returning to becoming one with our natural environment, and ensuring a sustainable future for generations to come." – Gerard Black, 2023*

Gerard Black is a proud Worimi man. After a 10 year career as a tattoo artist Gerard is now focusing on his painting, drawing and digital art. His work reflects his Indigenous background, storytelling and his love of nature and draws on his strong design background from tattooing to produce a unique style of art. This together connects ancient Indigenous art with modern design and medium, bringing them together into the future, creating a new modern style promoting reconciliation and connection.

Gerard's work establishes a link between landscapes, reality and the spirit within, as Gerard often uses actual topographic maps as the basis for his artwork. He uses the physical colours, shapes and landmarks as a jumping off point. He then uses ancient designs and patterns to symbolise the different aspects of his art, tap into his Indigenous heritage with designs, shapes, colours and themes.

# Council's Commitment to Reconciliation

**The following statement was adopted by Council on 25 May 2021. The adoption of this statement represented a symbolic launching of Council's Reconciliation journey and a commitment to following the four stages of Reconciliation Australia's Reconciliation Action Plan framework – Reflect, Innovate, Stretch and Elevate.**

Surf Coast Shire Council wishes to Acknowledge the Wadawurrung People, and the Gulidjan and Gadubanud Peoples of the Eastern Maar, as the Traditional Owners of the lands, waters, seas and skies we now call Surf Coast Shire.

We Acknowledge their custodianship, caring for Country and continuous connections to Culture over tens of thousands of years. We pay our respects to their Elders past and present.

Further, we Acknowledge all other Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples who are also part of today's Surf Coast Shire community.

Our Council Acknowledges that past and current laws, government policies, actions and attitudes have caused and continue to cause great pain, grief and suffering for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples.

We feel and express deep sorrow that these actions and attitudes have occurred and continue to occur, and we are determined to work with the Registered Traditional Owner Corporations and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples within the community to acknowledge truths, address wrongs and bring about positive change towards true Reconciliation, ensuring they are not repeated.

We are committed to Reconciliation. That commitment is founded on respect, and we recognise a need to grow our understanding of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture, one of the oldest living cultures in the world.

This Reconciliation Action Plan is the beginning of a journey as we walk together, and with the Traditional Custodians of the land and water.



*Council staff education session,  
Wadawurrung Country*

# Message from the Mayor and CEO



**We are extremely proud to present Council's first Reflect Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP), on behalf of our fellow Surf Coast Shire Councillors, staff and volunteers.**

Our journey to this point has been a long and winding one. Our work on the Reflect RAP began back in May 2021, when Council made a formal commitment to Reconciliation.

We then began preparing a draft Reflect RAP. Central to this process was us undertaking a period of deep listening with Traditional Owners and First Nations people in our community.

By taking the time to learn from those that would generously give their knowledge and perspectives so that we could grow our understanding, Council has been able to truly reflect on its journey so far. We feel that we are now in the right place to present this Reflect RAP.

This doesn't mean that we have been resting on our laurels. Our commitment to walk with First Nations people towards Reconciliation has been stronger than ever over these past two years.

The Surf Coast Shire Council Plan 2021-2025, which sets the strategic direction for all of Council's work, places First Nations Reconciliation as Theme One.

Respectful consultation with Registered Aboriginal Parties, Reconciliation Victoria and other key First Nations partners, will continue to be paramount across all facets of Council's work.

We have stepped up to our role as a leader in Reconciliation in our community, firstly by acknowledging that 26 January is not a date to celebrate; and in April this year, Council declared its support for the Voice to Parliament.

There is much work to be done, and this Reflect RAP provides us the road map to progress on our path. We will continue to be guided by the principles in our Community Vision; Council Plan; Commitment to Reconciliation; and be informed by the Victorian Aboriginal and Local Government Strategy 2021-2026.

As an organisation we look forward to continuing to listen and deepen our understanding of First Nations perspectives, history and culture. Together, we can achieve a more equal and respectful future.

*Liz Pattison*

Cr Liz Pattison  
Mayor

*Robyn Seymour*

Robyn Seymour  
CEO

## Our Reconciliation Vision

**To promote unity, respect, and understanding by walking together with Traditional Owners and all First Nations people in our community towards genuine Reconciliation.**



*Boonwurrung Elder and children's author Aunty Fay Muir visits with children at Helen M Kininmonth Pre-School, Winchelsea, Gulidjan Country – Eastern Maar nation*



# Our business

## Surf Coast Shire Today

Surf Coast Shire was proclaimed on 9 March 1994 and is home to some of the world's most spectacular coastline, scenic rainforests and magnificent beaches.

It is among the fastest growing regional municipalities in Victoria and covers an area of 1,560 km<sup>2</sup> stretching along the coast from Torquay to Lorne, and inland to Inverleigh, Winchelsea and Deans Marsh.

Council works across 18 different locations which includes kindergartens, visitor information centres and works depots. Council employs approximately 430 people and enlists the help of approximately 200 volunteers across all its divisions and services.

The role of the Surf Coast Shire is constituted under the Local Government Act (Vic) 2020, to provide leadership for the good governance of the municipal district and the local community.

## The Invasion of Victoria

Surf Coast Shire is a local government area that operates as part of the wider democratic system of legislature and governance in Australia. This structure is known as the Westminster model, which originated in England and since colonisation has been used to govern in Australia as well as other Commonwealth countries such as New Zealand and Canada.

The invasion and subsequent colonisation of Victoria started in the early 1800s. John Batman and his expedition party arrived on the Bellarine Peninsula in 1835. With the Europeans came cattle, sheep, rabbits; land clearing, fences and roads, which they called "settlement" and later "development".

In the preceding time this beautiful and prosperous place had different boundaries – those that occur naturally such as rivers, creeks and mountains. These lands were occupied, carefully managed and cared for by three distinct Traditional Owner groups: the Wadawurrung People; the Gulidjan People; and the Gadubanud People.

Since time immemorial – or using conservative scientific estimation, for at least 60,000 years – the First Peoples had thrived here. The evidence of how they prospered is everywhere. The Surf Coast Shire, as we now call it, has always been a desirable place to live, work and play.

The "settlement" of this region of Victoria was a brutal, lawless and immoral period. Settlers, troopers and police, emboldened by racist policies and a concerted campaign of misinformation, employed unjust practices to claim property rights and "settle" this land, predominantly for farming.

Murders and massacres, forced removal of children, forced resettlement of the First Peoples onto missions and reserves, theft and the desecration of cultural heritage ensued. The south west of Victoria was amongst the hardest hit places for the Aboriginal population.

That their bloodlines, language, culture and heritage survives today is testament to the resilience and ingenuity of the First Peoples of this region.

## Protecting Cultural Heritage

Council has a responsibility to work with the applicable Registered Aboriginal Parties to ensure that we abide by the legislation contained in the Aboriginal Heritage Act (2006), in order to protect the invaluable Cultural Heritage of this region, both tangible and intangible.

For works, developments, infrastructure and facilities on Wadawurrung Country, Council engages with the Wadawurrung Traditional Owners Aboriginal Corporation; while on Gulidjan or Gadubanud Countries, Council engages with the Eastern Maar Aboriginal Corporation.

Registered Aboriginal Parties are appointed by the Aboriginal Heritage Council and are the primary source of advice; and the primary guardians, keepers and knowledge holders of Aboriginal Cultural Heritage.



Murrin Garrang tree sculpture launch, Kuarka-dorla (Anglesea), Wadawurrung Country

## Our Community

As reflected in our Council Vision, Council Plan and Statement of Commitment to Reconciliation, a large and growing section of the Surf Coast Shire community has a growing interest in celebrating the rich and unique history and culture of the Country where they live.

Through community engagement conducted to inform projects, policies and action plans; along with feedback surveys from Council events, we know that an increasing number of people in the Surf Coast community are passionate, active allies for First Nations people and issues.

Community groups and individuals across the Shire are increasingly engaging with Council to gain support. Whether through grants, programs, events or seeking direct advice, there is a strong appetite to collaborate with Traditional Owners or First Nations artists and practitioners on exciting projects that help our community and environment thrive.

Surf Coast Shire has **38,610 residents**.

**0.6%** identified as being of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander descent.

(2021 Census)

## Our Environment

The natural environment is a strong part of the identity of Council and its community. It is something that we value highly and are committed to protecting and enhancing. From individuals paving the way in environmental and climate action, to residents across the coastal and hinterland areas connecting to nature, the natural environment is integral to us.

Council recognises this, with our purpose stating "we exist to help our environment and community to thrive" and our Climate Emergency declaration. Both Council and community alike have been involved in programs, activities, and initiatives responding to complex environmental and climate issues, to safeguard our diverse landscapes and plant and animal species.

The environment and climate emergency response being such an integral part of who we are in the Surf Coast Shire gives non-First Nations people a unique opportunity to understand and respect the perspective of Traditional Owners as they care for Country. "Country to an Aboriginal person means both a place of belonging and a way of believing, it includes both the physical place but also the people, the culture and the nature of a place."

**Reconciliation Australia**

# Our Reconciliation Action Plan

**This Reflect RAP has been more than two years in the making. We have taken the necessary time to listen and learn, so that we can present a plan that accurately reflects where we are as an organisation, and where we want to be.**

To **reflect** is to:

- think deeply and carefully to better understand ourselves
- embody the values of the community that we serve
- influence attitudes and actions in a positive way

We are doing this by:

- Working closely with Traditional Owner partners
- Listening to First Nations people from our community
- Consulting with our staff
- Being informed by the Victorian Aboriginal and Local Government Strategy
- Partnering with Reconciliation Victoria

The actions contained in this Reflect RAP include a number of mandatory actions supplied by Reconciliation Australia.

The RAP Framework was developed by Reconciliation Australia and has been utilised by a wide range of organisations nationwide since its introduction in 2006.

There are four types of RAP to allow organisations to build on and progress their Reconciliation journey – beginning with Reflect, followed by Innovate, Stretch and finally Elevate.

These are based around three core pillars: Relationships, Respect and Opportunities. The purpose of RAPs is to “provide tangible and substantive benefits for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, increasing economic equity and supporting First Nations self-determination.”

**Reconciliation Australia**

Council has integrated the actions mandated by the Reflect RAP Framework and expanded on this with a number of further actions informed by our work in direct consultation with Traditional Owners and RAP partners, and influenced by the Victorian Aboriginal and Local Government Strategy (VALGS).

The VALGS has seven pillars: Culture, Respect and Trust; Awareness and Engagement; Accountability and Direction; Governance and Participation; Economic Participation; Health and Wellbeing; Resourcing and Funding.

By taking a more holistic approach to our first RAP, Council aims to address both national and broader societal aims of the Reconciliation movement; and local, focused assertions of Traditional Owners as outlined in the respective Country Plans of the Registered Aboriginal Parties: Eastern Maar Community’s Country Plan *Meerreengeeye Ngakeepoorryeeyt* (Our Country, Far Seeing) 2015 and Wadawurrung Traditional Owners Aboriginal Corporation’s *Paleert Tjaara Dja* (Let’s Make Country Good Together) 2020-2030.

Furthermore, this Reflect RAP aims to align with the actions and aims outlined in other current Council plans, policies and strategies, in order to strengthen our collective resolve and be accountable for the promises we make as we continue on this path towards Reconciliation.

For example, Theme One of our Council Plan 2021-2025 is First Nations Reconciliation. Our commitment is for Reconciliation with Traditional Owners and other Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People in our community through respectful engagement, acknowledgement and collaboration.



Yorta Yorta man, Surf Coast Shire resident Anthony. Photo courtesy of Zoe Strapp

This is further reflected in our Community Vision:

**From the hinterland to the coast, from the First Peoples to the children of the future, we are an active, diverse community that lives creatively to value, protect and enhance the natural environment and our unique neighbourhoods. We will leave the Surf Coast better than we found it.**

The vision also contains the specific principle: “Respectful engagement and consultations with First Nations”.

This approach is necessary to ensure that we are including actions in this plan that will make positive progress, however imperfect, towards Reconciliation. This is preferable to a “tick the box” administrative approach which would run counter to the aims of the Reflect RAP.

In 2021, we committed to developing a Reconciliation Action Plan and this Reflect RAP is the beginning of a journey to strengthen engagement through respectful partnerships and consultations with the Traditional Owners and all First Nations people in our community. To listen and learn, and to walk together. Council intends to use the RAP framework, focusing on relationships, respect, governance, and opportunities to implement this RAP from December 2023–December 2024. We also intend to continue our firm commitment to advance Reconciliation through the development of future Reconciliation Action Plans.

# Our RAP Partners

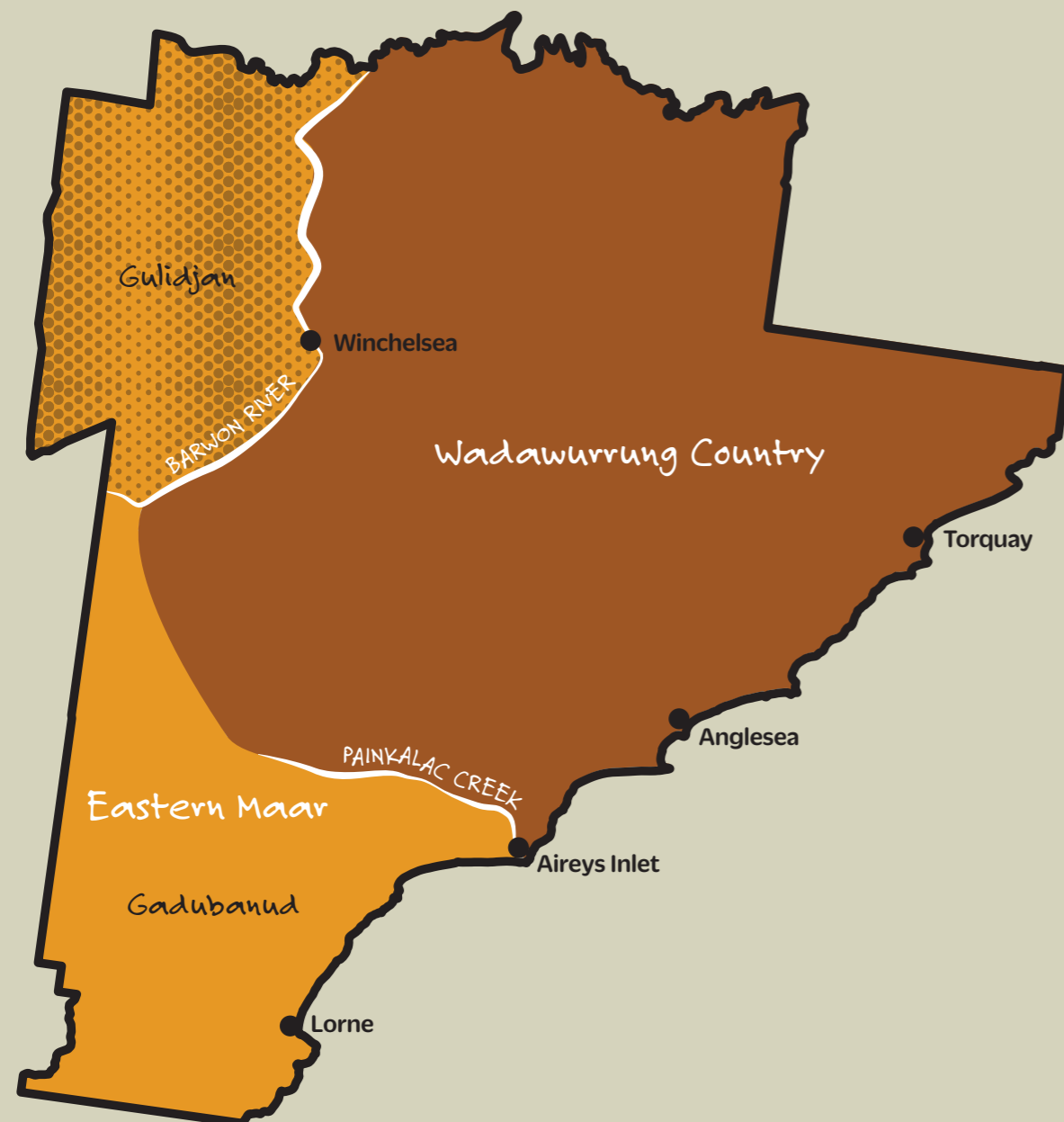
## Traditional Owners

Council continues to work closely with both of the Registered Aboriginal Parties for this municipal area, the Wadawurrung Traditional Owners Aboriginal Corporation and the Eastern Maar Aboriginal Corporation. Aboriginal Cultural Heritage matters, ceremonial services and cultural education are just a few of many ways we engage and consult with Traditional Owners and other specialist staff on a regular basis under the *Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006*.

We recognise the increasing demand for guidance and knowledge that the Registered Aboriginal Parties are experiencing from all sectors. Council will continue to explore ways to improve its engagement processes and to work with other local government entities to address this issue.



Barwon river walk, Gulidjan Country – Eastern Maar nation



### What is a Registered Aboriginal Party?

The *Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006* recognises Registered Aboriginal Parties as “the primary guardians, keepers and knowledge holders of Aboriginal Cultural Heritage”. Registered Aboriginal Parties perform a number of important functions, including managing and protecting Aboriginal Cultural Heritage on Country. Currently, there are 11 Registered Aboriginal Parties that cover approximately 75 per cent of Victoria.

Further information: [Aboriginal Heritage Council](#)

### What is Native Title?

Native Title is the recognition in Australian law under the *Native Title Act 1993* that some Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people continue to hold rights and interests in land and water. For Native Title to be recognised, the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people’s laws and customs must have been observed in a substantially uninterrupted way from the time of European settlement until now.

Further information: [Auditor-General’s Department](#)

'The contemporary Eastern Maar nation traces an unbroken line of descent back to our ancestors over many thousands of years. We have survived as our Country's First People and, despite the well documented colonial history, continue to maintain economic, traditional, cultural, familial and spiritual ties to our homeland.

Through the leadership and authority of our Elders, we are practicing our laws and customs, strengthening our system of governance and nurturing our connection to Country. We know our Country and are part of it, and maintain our role and desire to continue to care for Country and all of its important values.

Being here defines us, and coming home makes us feel accomplished, purposeful and positive.'

**Meerreengeeye Ngakepoorryeeyt**

(Our Country, Far Seeing)

Eastern Maar Community Country Plan (2015)



Lorne, Gadubanud Country – Eastern Maar nation

'As Wadawurrung Traditional Owners today we have fought hard to survive the impacts of colonisation and dispossession and maintain this connection with Dja. Our Elders suffered deeply, and these impacts continue to be felt across the generations. With our Elders strength and resilience from knowing Country wasn't ceded, they ensured our cultural connections, knowledge and responsibilities for Country continued. Our Elders voices were silenced due to fear and protection for their children, as assimilation policies threatened to break us up, but we survived, and their voice and spirit is strong again. It is through their leadership the next generations of Wadawurrung are standing up proud, practicing and sharing culture and caring for Country. Having learnt from our Elders the ability to adapt to the changing circumstances of colonialization, has helped us to be resilient and maintain our cultural identity and practices within contemporary society.'

**Paleert Tjaava Dja**

(Let's Make Country Good Together)

Wadawurrung Traditional Owners Aboriginal Corporation Country Plan (2020-2030)



Torquay, Wadawurrung Country

## First Nations Community

Council aims to continue developing relationships and fostering communication with First Nations people in our community. We know that many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people call this region home, while maintaining their cultural ties to other Countries throughout this nation. We want to ensure First Nations people in our community feel represented by Council; and create opportunities for those interested to engage with us.

Council aims to further develop its relationship with the Wathaurong Aboriginal Co-operative, which provides culturally appropriate programs, support and services for all First Nations people living in Surf Coast Shire, as well as the wider Geelong, Bellarine and Colac regions.

## Reconciliation Victoria

Council is embarking on an exciting partnership with Reconciliation Victoria through its Moodji Partnerships Program. Reconciliation Victoria is the state-wide body promoting Reconciliation across Victoria, and works with organisations and individuals on developing respectful and meaningful relationships with First Peoples, while deepening respect and awareness for culture and Country.



Wadawurrung woman Corrina Eccles speaks to a group of children during “Beach Kinder” at Kuarka-dlorla (Anglesea), Wadawurrung Country



# Our Journey

**Councillors, teams, and individual officers have been respectfully consulting, collaborating and developing strong relationships with First Nations organisations and individuals for many years. While we have seen wonderful outcomes from this work, we also recognise that a more considered and cohesive approach will greatly benefit everyone.**

In this section we will explore some examples of recent and ongoing programs, projects and activities undertaken on Council’s Reconciliation journey to date. The adoption of this Reflect RAP will provide us with a clear direction and, importantly, the opportunity to embed our Reconciliation goals throughout the organisation, ensuring we follow through on our commitments.

## Acknowledgement of Country

In September 2022, Council adopted an Acknowledgement of Country Policy in order to ensure respectful recognition is given to Traditional Owners and all First Nations people who are part of the Surf Coast Shire community by way of either verbal or written Acknowledgement of Country.

The policy explains why it is necessary to Acknowledge Country and the guiding principles behind the practice of Recognition, Respect and Understanding. Further guidance around the cultural protocols and wording specific to our region will be provided in guidelines which are currently in development.

In June 2023, participants in Council’s Developing Leaders Program took part in an Acknowledgement of Country workshop with First Nations consultants from Arranyinha Pty Ltd, which explored their own connection to Country and the intent of acknowledging as a gesture of respect. Those developing leaders are now examples to their colleagues and community.

Council installed a new Acknowledgement of Country display at the main Civic Office in Torquay for National Reconciliation Week 2023. Positioned immediately in the public entrance to Customer Service, the striking display includes Council’s Acknowledgement of Country; Commitment to Reconciliation; the framed Reflect RAP artwork by Worimi man Gerard Black and original painting by

Wadawurrung woman Jenna Oldaker, Wunggurrwil Ba-gurrk Murrup (Strong Woman Spirit), that was reproduced as a mural at Wurdi Baierr stadium.

## Kindergartens

Council operates six kindergartens across the Shire area. Four are located on Wadawurrung Country: Anglesea Kindergarten, Kurrabee Myaring Children’s Centre at Torquay, Jan Juc Pre-School and Torquay Kindergarten; one on Gulidjan Country: Helen M Kininmonth Pre-School at Winchelsea; and one on Gadubanud Country: Lorne Kindergarten.

Kindergartens have been incorporating First Nations perspectives, culture and language into their curriculum for many years. Generations of young children are reaping the benefits of these programs and experiences, which is complemented by the services’ bush kinder program.

Some examples of the many First Nations experiences over the past two years have been: Wadawurrung man and local resident, artist Billy-Jay O’Toole completed murals at both Jan Juc and Anglesea Kindergartens; Boonwurrung Elder and author Aunty Fay Muir OAM story time visits with four year-old groups at each Shire kinder for National Reconciliation Week 2022; and kinder staff enjoyed a unique professional development experience with a Walk on Wadawurrung Country cultural education session for its annual staff day.

# Reflection #1:

## Raising First Nations Voices via Council Events



Pilk Purriyn (sunrise) Truth-telling Event  
26 January 2023  
Torquay, Wadawurrung Country

**Council has utilised its annual Community Events calendar to highlight First Nations issues and raise the voices of both established and emerging First Nations leaders. A range of diverse issues and topics have been presented such as the Voice to Parliament, Survival Day, truth-telling about our colonial history, art as a medium for truth-telling and cultural practice; how to be an ally to First Nations people; and the difference between equality and equity are some of the topics that have been explored.**

This approach is in line with Council's strong commitment to Reconciliation as embedded in our Council Plan, while also recognising the growing appetite within our community to hear from First Nations speakers and engage on topics related to Reconciliation. Moreover, this yearning for understanding is reflective of the national zeitgeist as Australia reckons with its cultural identity and colonial history in response to the 2017 Uluru Statement from the Heart which calls for Voice, Treaty and Truth.

In addition to the annual observance of NAIDOC Week (the only annual First Nations event observance prior to 2022) Council added National Reconciliation Week as a Tier One event in 2022. The inaugural NRW event featured a keynote address by Adnyamathanha woman Marsha Uppill on the topic of "How to be an Ally" followed by an interview with Worimi man and artist Gerard Black – with the then Mayor Cr Libby Stapleton – about his artistic journey, hopes for Reconciliation and the artwork he created for this Reflect RAP.

The inaugural Pilk Purriyn truth-telling event at sunrise on 26 January took Council's First Nations community events scope to a new level. Following careful consideration and direct engagement with First Nations community members via a focus group, Council had resolved to no longer engage in celebrations marking Australia Day. Instead Council embarked on a unique collaboration with Wadawurrung Traditional Owners Aboriginal Corporation to mark Survival Day with deep listening at a sunrise gathering of First Nations people and allies at Cosy Corner beach.

An initial expectation of 200 people was soon surpassed by registrations of more than 1,800 individuals, swelling to more than 2,000 on the day. The feedback from Pilk Purriyn event surveys was overwhelming in its positivity and gratitude for the opportunity this event had provided to our community. Feedback such as this from a First Nations person: "For the first time in my life on this

*day, I felt heard. I felt seen. I felt respect. I felt connected, and I felt the tiniest glimmer of hope for our mob as more and more people arrived and stood beside me and my people in silence and respect."* While this comment was indicative of the many hundreds of responses from allies in the community: "Wise, solemn, uplifting and profound in its message of truth telling and reconciliation. A nuanced, honest and vital step forward."

International Women's Day on 8 March saw the launch of Wadawurrung woman and artist Jenna Oldaker's mural Wunggurrwil Ba-gurrk Murrup (Strong Woman Spirit) which adorns the inside wall of Torquay's Wurdi Baierr stadium. Then to mark National Reconciliation Week 2023, Council heard a call to action from Wadawurrung woman Corrina Eccles on her people's history and the importance of a Voice to Parliament; followed by a keynote address from one of the most sought-after First Nations speakers in Australia with From the Heart: An Evening with Thomas Mayo.

In July, Council's NAIDOC Week 2023 event was held, for the first time, on Gulidjan Country at Winchelsea. This was an important milestone for Council, as we engaged with Eastern Maar Aboriginal Corporation for the Welcome to Country and Smoking Ceremony to be delivered at the Winchelsea Shire Hall. The in-conversation event and accompanying exhibition on the work of Yorta Yorta/Baraparapa artist and academic Aunty Dr Jenny Murray-Jones was a simultaneously intellectual and artistic feast centred on truth-telling in the distinctly colonial surrounds of the historic hall.

While the appetite for these events continues to grow, Council is working to balance the resources requirements placed on the delivery of these important artistic, cultural and social justice occasions for the community. We also must continue to understand our role as community leaders in bringing First Nations voices into the spotlight; and the opportunities for inclusion and self-determination that these events provide.

**2023 First Nations Events**



**Pilk Purriyn (Sunrise) Truth-telling Event**

Survival Day: 26 January 2023  
 Cosy Corner Beach, Torquay  
 Wadawurrung Country



**Wunggurrwil Ba-gurrk Murrup (Strong Woman Spirit)**

International Women's Day: 8 March 2023  
 Wurdi Baierr Stadium, Torquay  
 Wadawurrung Country

Wadawurrung woman, artist Jenna Oldaker  
 with Wadawurrung Elders



**An Evening with Thomas Mayo**

National Reconciliation Week: 29 May 2023  
 Council Chambers, Torquay  
 Wadawurrung Country

First Nations residents of Surf Coast Shire  
 meet with Thomas Mayo



**NAIDOC Week: 6 July 2023**

Winchelsea Shire Hall, Winchelsea  
 Gulidjan Country – Eastern Maar nation

Yorta Yorta/Baraparapa woman, artist  
 Aunty Dr Jenny Murray-Jones in  
 conversation with Harriet Gaffney

# Reflection #2:

Council engages Wadawurrung land management on Country



Uncle Norm Eccles, Acting CEO Wadawurrung Traditional Owners  
Aboriginal Corporation Liam Murphy, Surf Coast Shire Council Mayor  
Liz Pattison and Wadawurrung woman Corrina Eccles  
Djarrak (Bells Beach), Wadawurrung Country



Gobata Dja team members at Djarrak (Bells Beach), Wadawurrung Country

**There is a distinct irony to celebrating an occasion when Traditional Owners are formerly engaged to care for their own Country. Nevertheless, it was with great pride and Reconciliation spirit that Council and Wadawurrung Traditional Owners Aboriginal Corporation worked together to achieve just that.**

WTOAC's Gobata Dja (Caring for Country) Natural Resource Management team were engaged to carry out revegetation and erosion management works at Djarrak (Bells Beach). The milestone arrangement was the first of its kind for both Council and WTOAC and plans are underway for these services to be undertaken at other sites of cultural significance to Wadawurrung People managed by Council.

The first day spent caring for and helping to heal this very special place was 7 June 2023. The day was attended by Wadawurrung Elders and leaders, commencing with a Welcome to Country and Smoking Ceremony. Surf Coast Shire Mayor, Cr Liz Pattison also attended and the day was celebrated by both Council and WTOAC via social and local print media. The collaboration of the respective communications teams built on the joint communications approach developed during the Pilk Purriyn truth-telling event.

Operationally, this opportunity was championed by members of Council's Environment team with support from Procurement and Workplace Health and Safety staff. The positive example of working with WTOAC to navigate and complete the procurement and administrative requirements in order for the Gobata Dja team to be added to Council's Approved Supplier list was then shared by members of those teams with a Network of Councils on Wadawurrung Country. The knowledge sharing example was described by another council's procurement coordinator as a "valuable information exchange".



# Reflection #3:

## Moriac's Structure Plan with a difference



Moriac, Wadawurrung Country

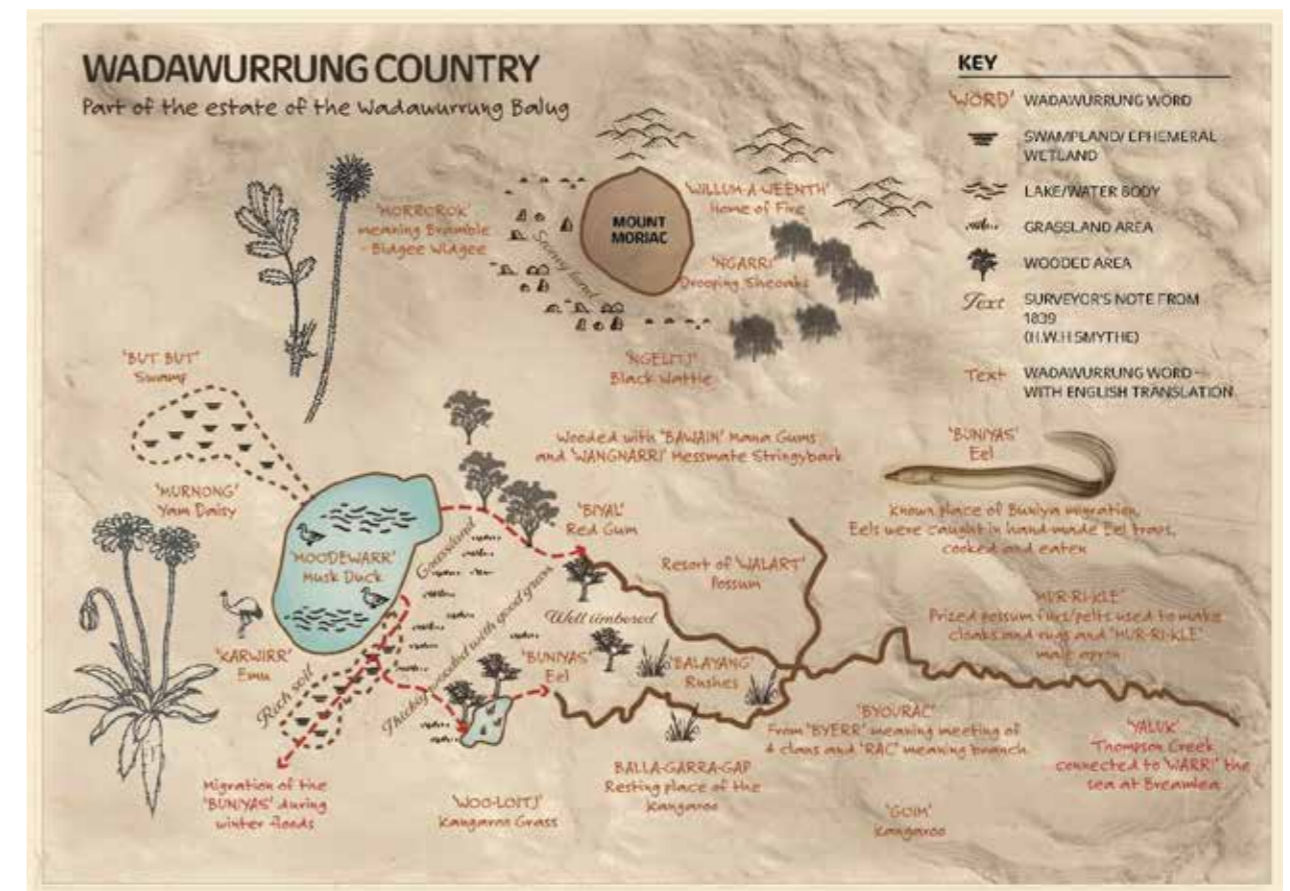
**A determination to do things differently in order to Acknowledge the First Peoples and the history of place beyond European settlement, has seen the recently developed Moriac Structure Plan emerge as a new model in Strategic Planning at Council.**

The creation of a Structure Plan is an important undertaking as it maps the plan for a town's future. Considering how and where the town should grow, the Structure Plan aims to protect the town's unique features and characteristics. It is prepared through a rigorous consultation and community engagement process that allows community members to share their aspirations and concerns for both the natural and built environments.

When drafting the Moriac Structure plan, members of Council's Strategic Planning team consulted with Wadawurrung Traditional Owners Aboriginal Corporation. Through these discussions an idea emerged to engage an independent historian, with experience working with Registered Aboriginal Parties in the region, with a view to incorporating cultural knowledge and understanding of the landscape prior to colonisation.

The result is a unique and beautiful abstract map of Moororok (Moriac) unlike anything Council has produced before, that forms an important part of the plan's Part A. A History of Landscape. The map presents the information shared by Wadawurrung Traditional Owners, combined with features, details and language rediscovered through the historian's research.

Wadawurrung language describes the natural features, plants and animals; and these are juxtaposed with the surveyor's notes from 1839 which lists the land's desirable attributes such as "rich soil" and "good grass" as if they had occurred by some happy accident, failing to acknowledge or even consider the First People's land management practices were the reason.



**Moororok (Moriac)**  
A History of Landscape

# Reflection #4:

## Staff training builds Cultural Awareness



Surf Coast Shire Council staff on Wadawurrung Country

**Council has undertaken a concerted campaign of cultural education and awareness raising for Councillors and staff via a series of training opportunities offered over the past two years. These experiences are often emotional, sometimes confronting, but always embraced with positivity and enthusiasm by the participants. Some staff have described their Cultural Awareness Training experiences with Council as “the best training experience I’ve ever had”.**

We are proud to have offered a wide variety of training opportunities directly with local Traditional Owners through both Registered Aboriginal Parties, Wadawurrung Traditional Owners Aboriginal Corporation and Eastern Maar Aboriginal Corporation, as well as several other First Nations consultants and educators including Arranyinha Pty Ltd, Mirriyu Cultural Consulting and the Avaivilla Group.

In the past two years, staff training days, workshops and forums have provided more than 450 opportunities for Councillors and staff to develop their personal cultural awareness and thus apply that learning in their work. These opportunities have included Traditional Owner-led On Country

experiences, Unconscious Bias and Privilege: First Nations, Working in Two Worlds and Allyship, Acknowledgement of Country, Reconciliation, Aboriginal Cultural Heritage, Racism, Foundational Cultural Respect and Women’s Wellness: First Nations.

Participation has been offered to most Councillors and staff, however there is still work to be done to ensure these valuable experiences are offered widely to different teams and units, as well as different levels of management. Also to be addressed are participation barriers for staff who may have accessibility issues, work part-time or shift hours, or those working remotely or at one of our depots.

### Eastern Maar Cultural Awareness and On Country Immersion



June 2023  
Mantra Hotel, Lorne  
Gadubanud Country – Eastern Maar nation



June 2023  
 Teddy's Lookout, Lorne  
 Gadubanud Country – Eastern Maar nation

### Participants' comments

*Don't act first, then inform. Involve Traditional Owners from the beginning, just as you would any partner. This resonated with me as I have already implemented this thinking into my work.*

*What an incredible experience. I have learnt more about Traditional Owners, Aboriginal culture, heritage and history in the 18 months I have been at Surf Coast Shire Council than I have in my 40 years of life.*

*Overall an outstanding day which has informed me both personally and professionally.*

*I felt very privileged to hear directly from Indigenous representatives about their culture, stories, truths, experience and knowledge.*

### Wadawurrung 'Walk on Country' Cultural Education Sessions



Quarterly from November 2021-August 2023  
 Freshwater Creek, Breamlea, Jan Juc and Anglesea  
 Wadawurrung Country

### Participants' comments

*I'm looking forward to embedding learning from this session in the workplace.*

*We only just scratched the surface in a day – we have so much to learn!*

*The biggest takeaway is that the work we do in Planning does have direct impacts.*

*We need to protect and respect and continue to educate ourselves about the significance and history we have in our region.*

*It is amazing to be able to understand Aboriginal culture and history at a local level.*

*I believe we, as individuals, need to gain an understanding and awareness of the Country we live in – what's happened in the past; our knowledge now; and looking to a better future.*

# Our Touchstone – the Victorian Aboriginal and Local Government Strategy

Forward thinking and practical, the Victorian Aboriginal and Local Government Strategy 2021-2026 (VALGS) is an enormously valuable resource that Council is using to help inform this Reflect RAP. It is a road map of where Council wants to go on its Reconciliation journey. It also illustrates a bigger picture of how the State and Local Governments collectively should be partnering with First Nations people to achieve self-determination and Reconciliation.

## Seven Strategic Pillars

In this Reflect RAP, Council is concentrating the majority of its actions on the first Strategic Pillar: Culture, Respect and Trust.

- Culture, respect and trust
- Awareness and engagement
- Accountability and direction
- Governance and participation
- Economic participation
- Health and wellbeing
- Resourcing and funding

## Pathway Stages

The Strategy's seven pillars follow recommended pathways with three stages in which to measure success: **understand**, **embrace** and **embed**. The pathways are cyclical by design, so that once work is embedded, it will return back to the understand phase. Thus deepening engagement and encouraging continuous growth and improvement.

## The Strategy on Cultural Safety

Culturally safe and racism-free services are those in which people feel safe, where they can freely affirm their identity, and where their needs are met. Local programs and services that Aboriginal people access must be inclusive, respectful, responsive, and relevant – and culturally safe practice frameworks must inform them.

Whether through Aboriginal organisations or mainstream services, it is vital Aboriginal Victorians can access culturally safe and culturally responsive services whenever they need them.

It is also important that local councils are culturally safe places for Aboriginal people to work. The Local Government Koorie Staff Network (the Network) is a staff-led network for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Staff employed within the Local Government Sector. The Network provides a culturally safe forum for staff to collaborate and provide peer support. The Network is positioned as a strong advocacy voice for Aboriginal staff and can feed both challenges and opportunities back to State and Local Government. (source: [VALGS](#))

## The Strategy on Self-Determination

Self-determination is a fundamental human right. In the more than two centuries since colonisation, Aboriginal Victorians have strived for this right to make decisions about matters affecting their lives and communities.

Aboriginal Victorians still face many barriers to self-determination. Reconciliation can't be achieved until shared history is understood, barriers to self-determination are identified and removed, and Aboriginal people have control of decisions that affect their lives(...)

Self-determination is enabled through cultural strength – cultural strength is enabled through cultural practice, kinship ties, connection to land and country, art, song, dance, healing, spirituality,



Anglesea kindergarten mural by Wadawurrung man, artist Billy-Jay O'Toole – Wadawurrung Country

empowerment, heritage, identity (belonging) and self-determination.

Self-determination is necessary for Aboriginal Victorians to achieve social, economic, political, and cultural equity based on their cultural values and ways of life. (source: [VALGS](#))

## The Strategy on Boundaries

Several boundaries apply across Victoria affecting Aboriginal Victorians and local councils, including but not limited to:

- Registered Aboriginal Parties' boundaries;
- boundaries of Recognition and Settlement Agreements (RSAs) under the Traditional Owner Settlement Act 2010;
- boundaries of Indigenous Land Use Agreements (ILUAs) under the Native Title Act 1993 (Cth), where these are not also the boundaries of a RSA;

- community-controlled service areas;
- Gathering Place boundaries;
- Treaty voting boundaries;
- local government municipal boundaries;
- state boundaries; and
- government department boundaries.

Traditional Owner Group boundaries don't align with state borders or local government areas. Dealing with multiple jurisdictions and municipalities lengthens processes and strains resources, creating complications for Traditional Owners and councils.

To support sustainable engagement and uphold self-determination principles, the Strategy encourages a Country-based approach. This means Aboriginal Victorians determine the engagement, informed by Country boundaries rather than local council boundaries. (source: [VALGS](#))

Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
<b>1. Establish and strengthen mutually beneficial relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and organisations.</b>	Identify Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and organisations within our local area or sphere of influence.	December 2023	Manager Community Support
	Research best practice and principles that support partnerships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and organisations.	December 2023	Manager Community Support
	Establish annual meeting with CEO of EMAC, WTOAC and Wathaurong Co-operative	December 2024	CEO
	Develop an EOI process for commissioning First Nations artists for Council projects.	August 2024	Manager Economic Development
<b>2. Build relationships through celebrating National Reconciliation Week (NRW).</b>	Circulate Reconciliation Australia's NRW resources and reconciliation materials to our staff.	April-May 2024	Manager Community Support
	RAP Working Group members to participate in an external NRW event.	27 May-3 June 2024	RAP Working Group
	Encourage and support staff and senior leaders to participate in at least one external event to recognise and celebrate NRW.	April-May 2024	General Manager Community Life
	Promote Council and local region's NRW events and activities internally via Shire Wire (staff intranet) and externally via Council social media and Reconciliation page of Council's website	May 2024	Manager Community Support
<b>3. Promote Reconciliation through our sphere of influence.</b>	Communicate our commitment to Reconciliation to all staff.	December 2023	CEO
	Identify external stakeholders that our organisation can engage with on our Reconciliation journey.	April 2024	Manager Community Support
	Identify RAP and other like-minded organisations that we could approach to collaborate with on our reconciliation journey.	April 2024	Manager Community Support
	Integrate local First Nations culture into regular plan for Child & Family Health Services.	December 2024	Manager Community Strengthening
	Maintain a dedicated Reconciliation page on Council's website with information about Council's commitment, activities, events and resources.	December 2023-December 2024	Manager Community Support
	Develop a Reconciliation page on Council's staff intranet The Shire Wire.	October 2024	RAP Working Group
	Host a community awareness-raising event (tier 1) at a location within Surf Coast Shire to recognise and celebrate NRW.	27 May-3 June 2024	Manager Community Support
<b>4. Promote positive race relations through anti-discrimination strategies.</b>	Research best practice and policies in areas of race relations and anti-discrimination.	July 2024	Manager People and Culture
	Conduct a review of HR policies and procedures to identify existing anti-discrimination provisions, and future needs.	July 2024	Manager People and Culture

Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
<b>5. Increase understanding, value and recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, histories, knowledge and rights through cultural learning.</b>	Conduct a review of cultural learning needs within our organisation.	October 2024	Manager People and Culture
	Conduct annual cultural self-reflection assessment of all staff.	May 2024	General Manager Community Life
	Develop a tailored training and accessible program to build knowledge, understanding and cultural competency of staff at induction and beyond.	October 2024	Manager of People and Culture
<b>6. Demonstrate respect to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples by observing cultural protocols.</b>	Develop an understanding of the local Traditional Owners as Custodians of the lands and waters within our organisation's operational areas.	May 2024	Manager Community Support
	Increase staff's understanding of the purpose and significance behind cultural protocols, including Acknowledgement of Country, Welcome to Country protocols.	May 2024	Manager Community Support
	Develop guidelines for practicing Acknowledgement of Country and protocols for Welcome to Country for Councillors, staff and volunteers.	May 2024	Manager Community Support
<b>7. Build respect for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and histories by celebrating NAIDOC Week.</b>	Raise awareness and share information amongst our staff about the meaning and importance of NAIDOC Week.	July 2024	Manager Community Support
	Introduce our staff to NAIDOC Week by promoting external events, activities in our local area.	June/July 2024	Manager Community Support
	RAP Working Group to participate in an external NAIDOC Week event.	First week in July 2024	RAP Working Group
<b>8. Support Early Years services to embed First Nations culture in their curriculum.</b>	Conduct audit of Early Years services to gauge current First Nations cultural programming.	October 2024	Manager Community Strengthening
	Support Early Years services to work with applicable Traditional Owners via Registered Aboriginal Party to integrate cultural programming.	October 2024	Manager Community Strengthening
	Support Early Years services to develop a RAP with <a href="#">Narragunnawali</a> .	October 2024	Manager Community Strengthening
	Develop and display Acknowledgement of Country plaques at each service.	August 2024	Manager Community Strengthening

Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
<b>9. Improve employment outcomes by increasing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander recruitment, retention and professional development.</b>	Develop a business case for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment within our organisation.	October 2024	Manager People and Culture
	Build understanding of current Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staffing to inform future employment and professional development opportunities.	May 2024	Manager People and Culture
	Research flexible, supporting and cultural inclusive models of employment to attract and retain Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees.	May 2024	Manager People and Culture
<b>10. Increase Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander supplier diversity to support improved economic and social outcomes.</b>	Investigate Supply Nation membership.	August 2024	Manager Integrity and Governance
	Investigate Kinaway and Ngarrimili websites and services, and other First Nations businesses and services.	August 2024	Manager Integrity and Governance
	Research how other LGAs and government organisations are developing new procurement strategies to support First Nations owned businesses.	August 2024	Manager Integrity and Governance
<b>11. Work in partnership with local Registered Aboriginal Parties in the management of Council land and protection of cultural sites.</b>	Develop high end principles and staff process to recognise and protect culturally significant sites on land which Council maintains.	December 2024	Manager Assets and Engineering & Manager Operations
	Explore opportunities for co-management of land, including vegetation management, protection of registered Cultural Heritage Sites and incorporation of Country Plan principles, on Council managed land.	December 2024	Manager Environment and Sustainability & Manager Operations
	Advocate for and build capacity to use cultural burning practices.	December 2024	Manager Community Safety
	Take action to enable a collaborative trial of fire burning practices on Council managed land.	December 2024	Manager Community Safety
	Develop and ensure implementation of a protocol to include relevant Registered Aboriginal Party in early consultation and engagement when developing a new growth strategy or structure plan.	May 2024	Manager Integrated Planning
<b>12. Work with Registered Aboriginal Parties to incorporate dual naming of places across the Shire.</b>	Develop language agreement with WTOAC for towns and parishes located on Wadawurrung Country within the Shire.	August 2024	Manager Assets and Engineering
	Produce signage of dual-naming in collaboration with WTOAC of towns and parishes located on Wadawurrung Country within the Shire.	October 2024	Manager Assets and Engineering
	Explore opportunities for dual-naming of places, towns and parishes on Gulidjan and Gadubanud Countries with EMAC.	April 2024	Manager Community Support
	Develop dedicated page of Council website to include Aboriginal language, translation and meaning of Council buildings, streets and places currently in use in collaboration with Registered Aboriginal Parties.	May 2024	Manager Community Support

Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
<b>13. Establish and maintain an effective RAP Working Group to drive governance of the RAP.</b>	Form a RAP Working Group to govern RAP implementation, a formal process.	February 2024	Manager Community Support
	Draft a Terms of Reference for the RAP Working Group.	May 2024	Manager Community Support
	Establish Traditional Owner or Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community representation on the RAP Working Group.	July 2024	Manager Community Support
<b>14. Work in partnership with Reconciliation Victoria through the Moodji Partnerships program</b>	Develop Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) for RAP Working Group with Reconciliation Victoria.	May 2024	Manager Community Support
	Collaborate with Reconciliation Victoria on Reconciliation strategies and actions within this Reflect RAP.	October 2024	Manager Community Support
<b>15. Provide appropriate support for effective implementation of RAP commitments.</b>	Define resource needs for RAP implementation.	May 2024	Manager Community Support
	Engage senior leaders in the delivery of RAP commitments on a quarterly basis.	February 2024 May 2024 August 2024 November 2024	CEO
	Define appropriate systems and capability to track, measure and report on RAP commitments.	March 2024	Manager Community Support
<b>16. Build accountability and transparency through reporting RAP achievements, challenges and learnings both internally and externally.</b>	Complete and submit the annual RAP Impact Measurement Questionnaire to Reconciliation Australia.	30 September annually	Manager Community Support
<b>17. Continue our Reconciliation journey by developing our next RAP.</b>	Register via Reconciliation Australia's <a href="#">website</a> to begin developing our next RAP.	August 2024	Manager Community Support

For further information regarding Council's Reflect Reconciliation Action Plan please contact:

Manager Community Support  
p. 03 5261 0600  
e. [info@surfcoast.vic.gov.au](mailto:info@surfcoast.vic.gov.au)