

### 3 Presentation of officer reports

#### 3.1 Draft Boroondara Reconciliation Strategy 2022-26

##### Abstract

At the Council meeting on Monday 26 April 2021, Council resolved a draft Boroondara Reconciliation Strategy (the draft Strategy) be presented to Council in late 2021 for consideration.

The purpose of this report is to seek the Services Delegated Committee's endorsement of the draft Boroondara Reconciliation Strategy 2022-26 (**Attachment 1**) for public exhibition between 16 November and 14 December 2021. The report also presents for the Services Delegated Committee's information the key-high level findings from the community consultations, which informed the development of the draft Strategy (**Attachment 2**).

The draft Strategy formalises Council's commitment to reconciliation by providing Council with a four-year vision for reconciliation in the municipality. It sets out a clear roadmap and framework for implementing reconciliation initiatives in the community in collaboration with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, service providers, community organisations and the broader community.

The draft Strategy was developed based on background research and extensive community consultations with key stakeholders from the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander sector, service providers, community organisations and the broader Boroondara community.

To provide advice on the development of the draft Strategy and to assist with facilitating the community consultations, Council engaged a consultant, Karen Milward, who is a Yorta Yorta<sup>1</sup> woman and well respected in the local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.

To ensure the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander voices were heard and respected and the diverse issues and priorities were understood, acknowledged and considered, 14 conversation style consultation sessions were held with 24 key stakeholders from the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander sector. These consultation sessions were held online during July and August 2021 and facilitated by Karen Milward. The consultation sessions enabled Council to hear directly about the aspirations for reconciliation locally in Boroondara and opportunities for action and collaboration with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander sector and peoples. The rich information gathered through these sessions formed the foundation for the development of the vision, themes, strategic objectives and focus areas for action in the draft Strategy.

As the reconciliation process involves the non-Aboriginal community working together with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, Council also undertook pulse check surveys with the broader community and local community service providers and organisations to understand their views and ideas about how to be involved and progress reconciliation locally.

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<sup>1</sup> Traditional Yorta Yorta lands lie on both sides of the Murray River roughly from Cohuna to Albury / Wodonga. They include towns such as Echuca, Shepparton, Benalla, Corowa and Wangaratta and extend northwards to just south of Deniliquin.

The online community pulse check survey, which was undertaken between 8 July and 1 August 2021, was open to all community members and was widely promoted through Council's communication channels. In total, 480 respondents completed the survey, which provided Council with a pulse check of the sentiment towards reconciliation and captured ideas for how Council might progress it locally, as well as respondents' level of knowledge of the histories and cultures of Aboriginal and Torres Strait peoples in Australia and Boroondara.

A targeted online survey was also undertaken and completed by 26 local organisations between July and August 2021. The organisations represented a cross-section of community groups and service providers in Boroondara including arts groups, religious groups, educational institutions, neighbourhood houses, health and wellbeing services and community groups. The purpose of the survey was to gather information about existing activities already taking place locally to support reconciliation and to gauge respondents' level of interest in engaging with Council and other organisations to progress reconciliation together.

To ensure the development of the Strategy was informed by feedback and advice from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, Council also met regularly with representatives from the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation and other key stakeholders to seek advice on the development.

The information gathered through the consultations with key stakeholders from the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander sector, the broader community and community organisations and service providers, as well as the background research was used to inform the development of the Strategy's vision, themes, strategic objectives, focus areas for action and the implementation plan. The three key themes along with the strategic objectives are outlined below:

- **Theme 1: Understand, Acknowledge and Respect**  
**Strategic Objective 1:** Build awareness and understanding of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories, cultures and peoples so we can contribute towards the reconciliation process and acknowledge and celebrate the resilience, strengths and contributions Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples make to the community.
- **Theme 2: Relationships and Partnerships**  
**Strategic Objective 2:** Create and strengthen reciprocal relationships between Traditional Owners and other Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations and peoples, Council, and the broader community so we can progress reconciliation initiatives together.
- **Theme 3: Governance and Leadership**  
**Strategic Objective 3:** Provide a whole of Council response to reconciliation and enable the voice of Aboriginal and Torres Strait islander peoples to inform Council decision making to support equitable and inclusive opportunities and participation in the community.

The implementation plan which will operationalise the draft Strategy outlines 46 actions, which will be undertaken over the four years of the Strategy. The implementation plan captures actions Council was already undertaking to progress reconciliation to ensure they continue to be prioritised and builds on these to include new actions Council will undertake in response to the findings from the consultation and research. The action plan will be reviewed and updated annually.

Council is committed to collaborating with the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation and other key Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders, community groups and organisations and the broader community to implement, monitor and evaluate the actions in the draft Boroondara Reconciliation Strategy.

To ensure the Strategy remains relevant and achievable, regular progress updates on the implementation of actions and feedback will be sought at Council's scheduled meetings with the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation. Advice will also be sought from other key stakeholders in the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander sectors as required. Furthermore, members of Council's newly established Internal Boroondara Reconciliation Advisory Committee will provide advice and feedback on the implementation of the draft Boroondara Reconciliation Strategy 2022-26 at its regular meetings.

## **Officers' recommendation**

That the Services Delegated Committee resolve to endorse the draft Boroondara Reconciliation Strategy 2022-26 (**Attachment 1**) for public exhibition from 16 November to 14 December 2021.

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**Responsible director:** Carolyn McClean, Director Community Support

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## 1. Purpose

The purpose of this report is to seek the Services Delegated Committee's endorsement of the draft Boroondara Reconciliation Strategy 2022-26 (the draft Strategy) (**Attachment 1**) for public exhibition from 16 November to 14 December 2021. The report also presents for the Services Delegated Committee's information the key high level findings from the community consultation which informed the development of the draft Strategy (**Attachment 2**).

## 2. Policy implications and relevance to community plan and council plan

The Boroondara Community Plan 2021-31 is structured around the following seven priority themes:

- Community, Services and Facilities
- Parks and Green Spaces
- The Environment
- Neighbourhood Character and Heritage
- Moving Around
- Local Economy
- Leadership and Governance.

The development and implementation of the draft Boroondara Reconciliation Strategy is particularly relevant to the following strategy in the Boroondara Community Plan 2021-31 under Theme 7 - Leadership and Governance:

- Strategy 7.8 - Celebrate and recognise Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, knowledge and heritage through implementing initiatives in partnership with our community and stakeholders.

## 3. Background

Reconciliation is an ongoing journey, which aims to bring together and strengthen relationships built on trust and respect between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and the wider Australian community. It is about helping all Australians understand our past shared history and how the past affects the lives of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples today. It is about respecting and valuing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander heritages and peoples, and aims to achieve equality in life expectancy, education, employment and other areas of disadvantage.

At the Council meeting on Monday 26 April 2021, Council resolved a draft Boroondara Reconciliation Strategy be presented to Council in late 2021 for consideration. The Boroondara Reconciliation Strategy will formalise Council's commitment to reconciliation and will provide Council with a vision for reconciliation in the municipality and set out a clear roadmap and framework for implementing reconciliation initiatives in the community. The Strategy will include a four-year vision and action plan outlining our existing commitments and identifying a program of additional actions, which will continue to contribute to the reconciliation process locally and in partnership with our community.

To inform the development of the draft Boroondara Reconciliation Strategy a number of research and consultation steps were undertaken as outlined below:

#### Reviewing Council's reconciliation initiatives

A review was undertaken of the initiatives Council is currently undertaking and actions it has completed in the last five years to contribute to the reconciliation process. This information provided the basis for which actions could be expanded and further progressed in the draft Strategy.

#### Understanding the context

To understand the context for the draft Strategy, a review was undertaken of relevant International, Australian and State legislation, policies, plans and actions.

Benchmarking was also undertaken against 15 local governments, including all Councils in the Eastern Metropolitan Region. The benchmarking examined the work of each council, including the structure of their reconciliation documents, language used, collaborations with stakeholders and focus areas for action. This information helped guide the structure of the draft Strategy and to assess actions which councils in a similar stage of their reconciliation journey were undertaking.

In addition, a demographic profile of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander residents in Boroondara was developed based on the 2016 Census. Furthermore, a review of the community consultation results from over 5,000 residents which informed the development of the Boroondara Community Plan 2021-31, was undertaken to identify any topics/ideas raised by residents related to reconciliation.

#### Advice sought from the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation and key stakeholders in the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander sector

To ensure the development of the Strategy was informed by feedback and advice from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, Council met regularly with representatives from the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation and other key stakeholders.

Monthly meetings with Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Elders and staff provided an opportunity to get to know one another, learn how to work together, share ideas and most importantly seek advice and feedback into the consultation design and development of the draft Strategy.

Advice and mentoring were also sought from other key stakeholders at regular meetings to ensure our approach is respectful, inclusive and strength based including but not limited to, First Peoples - State Relations Group - Department of Premier and Cabinet and the Inner Eastern Melbourne Area and Aboriginal Engagement team at the Department of Families, Fairness and Housing.

### Aboriginal consultant engaged to support consultation and development of Strategy

To provide advice on the development of the Strategy and to assist with facilitating the community consultations, Council engaged a consultant, Karen Milward, who is a Yorta Yorta<sup>2</sup> woman and well respected in the local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.

Karen was responsible for providing advice on the methodology of the consultation, facilitating and analysing data gathered from the consultation sessions with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and peoples, facilitating workshops with Council staff, and reviewing and providing recommendations and feedback on the draft Strategy.

### Community consultation

As outlined below in section 4 in more detail, Council undertook community consultation with key stakeholders from the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander sector (as well as individuals), the broader community, service providers and community organisations. The consultations were undertaken during July and August 2021 and enabled Council to understand the priorities and issues important to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and how the broader community and services providers and community organisations would like to be involved in progressing reconciliation locally. An overview of the key high level findings from the community consultations is provided in **Attachment 2**.

### Strategy development

Through the community consultations, rich information was gathered about why progressing reconciliation in Boroondara is important, the key steps Council can take to meaningfully contribute to it and ideas for reconciliation initiatives Council can undertake in collaboration with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander sector, service providers, community organisations and the broader community. These findings, along with other background information gathered, informed the development of the draft Strategy and in particular the vision, themes, strategic objectives, focus areas for action and implementation plan.

### Establishment of an Internal Boroondara Reconciliation Advisory Committee

At the Council Meeting on Monday 26 July 2021, Council resolved to form a new internal Advisory Committee, the Boroondara Reconciliation Advisory Committee to oversee the development and implementation of the Boroondara Reconciliation Strategy. The Advisory Committee is comprised of five councillors and senior Council officers and is required to provide feedback and advice to assist Council officers in relation to the development and implementation of the Boroondara Reconciliation Strategy after considering data, research and community inputs, firstly from the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation and then advice from external Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations and individuals and local community agencies.

The Terms of Reference for the Advisory Committee were adopted at the Council meeting on Monday 27 September 2021 and the first meeting was held in September with representatives from Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation in attendance.

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<sup>2</sup> Traditional Yorta Yorta lands lie on both sides of the Murray River roughly from Cohuna to Albury / Wodonga. They include towns such as Echuca, Shepparton, Benalla, Corowa and Wangaratta and extend northwards to just south of Deniliquin.

At a minimum, twice a year, Elders and staff from the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation will be invited to meet with the internal Advisory Committee. Other external Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community organisations and individuals and representatives from community groups and networks will also be invited as required to provide advice to the Committee so it can meet its objectives. This will enable Council officers to present on progress on the Boroondara Reconciliation Strategy and for the Advisory Committee to seek feedback on the implementation of the Boroondara Reconciliation Strategy from the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation. In addition to these meetings, the Advisory Committee may seek to further engage with members of the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation. To ensure the views of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders organisations and individuals are captured to inform the development and implementation of the Boroondara Reconciliation Strategy, Council officers will also continue to meet regularly with Elders and staff from the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation at scheduled meetings and also external Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations and individuals and local community agencies.

#### 4. Outline of key issues/options

The draft Boroondara Reconciliation Strategy (**Attachment 1**) formalises Council's commitment to reconciliation by providing Council with a four-year vision for reconciliation in the municipality. It sets out a clear roadmap and framework for implementing reconciliation initiatives in the community which are founded on three key themes which emerged during the community consultations. The Strategy includes an implementation plan, which outlines our existing commitments and identifies a program of additional actions which will continue to contribute to the reconciliation process locally and in partnership with our community.

Provided below is an overview of the community consultation process undertaken to inform the development of the draft Strategy. Also outlined below is an overview of the vision of the draft Strategy as well as the three key themes which it is founded on. Information about the next steps and project timelines is also provided.

##### Community consultation process

The development of the draft Boroondara Reconciliation Strategy was informed by a comprehensive community consultation process. This included three key phases:

- Phase 1 - targeted consultation sessions with key stakeholders from the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander sector
- Phase 2 - a community pulse check survey
- Phase 3 - a survey of a select group of community organisations and service providers from different sectors.

An overview of who was consulted as part of each phase is outlined below. Key high level findings from the community consultations is provided in **Attachment 2**.

### Phase 1 - consultation sessions with key stakeholders from the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander sector

To ensure the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander voices were heard and respected and the diverse issues and priorities were understood, acknowledged and considered, 14 conversation style consultation sessions were held with 24 people from the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander sector. The stakeholders consulted included an Aboriginal resident and representatives from 13 organisations, including but not limited to the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation, First Peoples - State Relations Group - Department of Premier and Cabinet, Inner East Melbourne Area and Aboriginal Engagement Team, Department of Families, Fairness and Housing and the Boroondara Reconciliation Network.

These sessions were held online during July and August 2021 and facilitated by Karen Milward. The consultation sessions enabled Council to hear directly about the aspirations for reconciliation locally in Boroondara and opportunities for action and collaboration with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander sector and peoples.

### Phase 2 - Community pulse check survey

As the reconciliation process involves the non-Aboriginal community working together with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, Council undertook an online community pulse check survey with the broader community.

The online survey was undertaken between 8 July and 1 August 2021 and gathered the broader community's views on reconciliation in Boroondara and how to progress it locally. A detailed communications and engagement plan was developed to promote the survey to ensure broad representation from our community with information distributed through Council's communication channels, including the Boroondara Bulletin, department networks and newsletters. In addition, targeted social media posts to reach a diverse cross section of our community was used. Furthermore, the survey was also sent to residents who registered to be a part of the Boroondara Community Plan deliberative engagement workshops to have their say, to assist in hearing from a diverse sample of our community.

In total, 480 respondents completed the survey. The online survey provided a pulse check of sentiment towards reconciliation, ideas for how Council might progress it locally, as well as respondents' level of knowledge of the histories and cultures of Aboriginal and Torres Strait peoples in Australia and Boroondara.

### Phase 3 - Survey of a select group of community organisations and service providers from different sectors

An online survey was also undertaken with 26 local organisations and services between July and August 2021 targeted at a cross-section of community groups and service providers in Boroondara including arts groups, religious groups, educational institutions, neighbourhood houses, health and wellbeing services and community groups. Organisations were invited to complete the survey via an email from Council staff. The purpose of the survey was to gather information about existing activities already taking place locally to support reconciliation and to gauge respondents' level of interest in engaging with Council and other organisations to progress reconciliation together.



The findings from the survey indicated service providers and community organisations in Boroondara are active in delivering a range of local reconciliation initiatives. Most importantly, all service providers/community groups expressed their interest to collaborate with Council and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders to further progress reconciliation in Boroondara.

The findings from the three phases of community consultation, along with other background information gathered, informed the development of the draft Strategy and in particular the vision, themes, strategic objectives, focus areas for action and implementation plan. Below is an overview of key aspects of the draft Strategy.

### Vision

The vision of the draft Strategy responds to the feedback through the consultations about the importance of strong relationships with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander sector and communities to progress reconciliation locally. It also captures the importance of acknowledging, respecting, considering and celebrating Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and communities. The proposed wording of the draft vision is below:

*The draft Boroondara Reconciliation Strategy 2021-25 (the Strategy) supports our community's vision as outlined in Council's key strategic document, the Boroondara Community Plan 2021-31, for 'A sustainable and inclusive community'.*

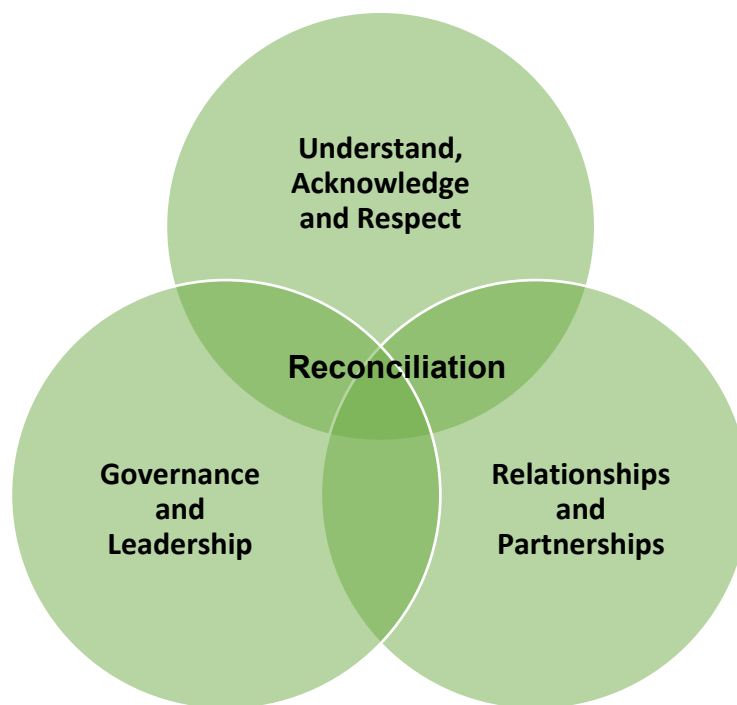
*The vision of the Strategy is to create a welcoming community where the histories, cultures, knowledges, achievements and aspirations of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples are acknowledged, respected, considered and celebrated. The vision of the draft Strategy is also to strengthen relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations and peoples so we can work in partnership together and with our broader community to progress reconciliation locally.*

### Key Themes, Strategic Objectives and Focus Areas for Action

The draft Boroondara Reconciliation Strategy is based on three key themes which were strongly evident across the consultations and research which informed the development of this Strategy. These three key themes are:

- 1. Understand, Acknowledge and Respect:** recognises that understanding, acknowledging and respecting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories, cultures and peoples is fundamental to being able to meaningfully contribute to the reconciliation process.
- 2. Relationships and Partnerships:** acknowledges the broader community has a key role to play in progressing reconciliation and that to do this we need to develop and strengthen relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations so we can work together.
- 3. Governance and Leadership:** working together across Council to progress reconciliation and providing opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to have a voice to inform Council decision making.

As noted in the draft Strategy, the three key themes shown in the figure below are all necessary and important to continue to progress reconciliation locally.



Under each of the three themes a Strategic Objective has been developed to outline what the community want us to achieve over the four-year period of the draft Strategy. Based on these objectives, a number of focus areas for action have been developed to detail what outcomes Council will seek to achieve over the next four years in pursuit of the Strategic Objective. The proposed wording of the strategic objectives and focus areas in the draft Strategy are outlined below.

### **Theme 1: Understand, Acknowledge and Respect**

**Strategic Objective 1:** Build awareness and understanding of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories, cultures and peoples so we can contribute towards the reconciliation process and acknowledge and celebrate the resilience, strengths and contributions Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples make to the community.

Focus areas for action:

- Improve Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural awareness within Council and in the community.
- Acknowledge and/or celebrate dates of significance to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.
- Acknowledge the Traditional Owners, Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation, within Council and across the municipality.
- Council to develop a better understanding of the local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and communities in Boroondara.
- Acknowledge and celebrate local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stories, histories, cultures and peoples.

### **Theme 2: Relationships and Partnerships**

**Strategic Objective 2:** Create and strengthen reciprocal relationships between Traditional Owners and other Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations and peoples, Council, and the broader community so we can progress reconciliation initiatives together.

**Focus areas for action:**

- Strengthen relationships and collaborate with the Traditional Owners, Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation.
- Establish and strengthen relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and peoples and identify opportunities for collaboration.
- Participate in the development and delivery of spaces and places for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community members in the Inner East.
- Identify opportunities for collaboration with community groups and service providers, networks and local schools to progress reconciliation initiatives locally.

**Theme 3: Governance and Leadership**

**Strategic Objective 3:** Provide a whole of Council response to reconciliation and enable the voice of Aboriginal and Torres Strait islander peoples to inform Council decision making to support equitable and inclusive opportunities and participation in the community.

**Focus areas for action:**

- Convene an internal Council advisory committee and stakeholder network to support implementation of the strategy.
- Promote and support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment, volunteering and traineeship opportunities and ensure the organisation is culturally welcoming.
- Support the procurement of goods and services from Victorian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander businesses.
- Contribute and support state-wide advocacy efforts in consultation with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders to address health inequities and the rights of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.
- Ensure accessibility of Council services and activities to ensure they are inclusive and support the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders peoples.

**Implementation Plan**

To develop actions which responded to the findings from the community consultations, two workshops were held with Council staff which were facilitated by Karen Milward. These workshops provided staff with an opportunity to hear about the findings from the community consultations and to identify potential actions. The workshops were followed by further conversations with relevant departments to identify actions to include in the implementation plan for the draft Strategy.

The implementation plan, which is Appendix One to the draft Strategy (**Attachment 1**), outlines 46 actions which will be undertaken over the four years of the Strategy. The wide range of departments responsible for implementing actions in the Strategy will ensure a whole of Council approach to progressing reconciliation within Council and the community. The implementation plan captures actions Council was already undertaking to progress reconciliation to ensure they continued to be prioritised and builds on these to include new actions Council will undertake in response to the findings from the consultation and research which informed the development of the draft Strategy.

The implementation plan will be reviewed annually and further actions which are developed in partnership with our partners and community will be included as relevant.

#### Key project timelines and next steps

Pending the Services Delegated Committee's endorsement, the draft Boroondara Reconciliation Strategy will go out for public exhibition from 16 November to 14 December 2021. During the public exhibition period, the community and key stakeholders from the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander sector including the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation will be invited to make written submissions on the draft Strategy for Council's consideration. Relevant changes will be made, and a final Strategy will be presented to Council for endorsement in early 2022.

### **5. Consultation/communication**

As noted above in Section 4, the development of the draft Boroondara Reconciliation Strategy was informed by a detailed community consultation process (**Attachment 2**).

Throughout the process of drafting the Strategy feedback was sought from key stakeholders to ensure the language used in the draft Strategy is respectful and the key themes and ideas raised during the community consultations are captured.

A high-level overview of the key findings from the community consultations was also provided at the first meeting of the Internal Boroondara Reconciliation Advisory Committee in September. This meeting was attended by the five Councillors on the Committee along with representatives from the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation.

The key stakeholders from the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders sector and the broader community will be able to comment on the draft Boroondara Reconciliation Strategy when it is on public exhibition from 16 November to 14 December 2021. The opportunity to comment on the draft Strategy will be widely promoted through:

- Council's website and social media channels
- electronic direct mail to the keep informed list and other email distribution lists involved in the engagement program.

### **6. Financial and resource implications**

Implementation of the actions in the draft Boroondara Reconciliation Strategy will be completed within the operational budget of the relevant department unless otherwise specified. All actions specified in the Implementation Plan which require funds not included in Council's Strategic Resource Plan will be referred to future budget deliberations and subject to further Council consideration prior to implementation.

### **7. Governance issues**

The officers responsible for this report have no general or material conflicts of interest requiring disclosure.

The implications of this report have been assessed in accordance with the requirements of the Victorian Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities, particularly those rights associated with respect, equality and dignity.

## **8. Social and environmental issues**

Advancing reconciliation contributes to greater understanding, trust and respect between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and the broader Australian community. It also contributes to an inclusive community where all community members feel valued.

## **9. Evaluation and review**

The actions in the draft Boroondara Reconciliation Strategy will be reviewed annually through Council's corporate reporting system. Progress updates will also be provided to the Internal Boroondara Reconciliation Advisory Committee at scheduled meetings. The Boroondara Reconciliation Strategy will be reviewed towards the expiry of the Strategy in 2026.

## **10. Conclusion**

The draft Boroondara Reconciliation Strategy will formalise Council's commitment to reconciliation and will further strengthen relationships with the local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, as well as promote understanding between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and the broader community in Boroondara. The Boroondara Reconciliation Strategy 2022-26 incorporating any relevant updates based on the feedback from the public exhibition period will be presented to Council for adoption in early 2022.

**Manager:** **Nicole White, Manager Community Planning and Development**

**Report officers:** Katherine Wright, Senior Coordinator Social Planning and Research

Liz O'Loughlin, Social Inclusion Policy and Project Officer

# Draft Boroondara Reconciliation Strategy

2022-26

**Responsible Directorate:** Community Support  
**Authorised By:** Council  
**Date of Adoption:** <Date>  
**Review Date:** 2026  
**Policy Type:** Council



## Attachment 1 - Draft Boroondara Reconciliation Strategy 2022-26

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## **1. Acknowledgement of Traditional Owners and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Communities in Boroondara**

The City of Boroondara acknowledges the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung people as the Traditional Owners and original custodians of this land, and pays our respects to their Elders past, present and emerging. We also acknowledge the diversity of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and the distinct communities, cultures, histories and experiences present within Boroondara today.

## **2. Thank you**

The City of Boroondara would like to thank and acknowledge the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation (WWCHAC) and all the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and organisations who generously gave their time throughout the consultation to share their ideas and aspirations for reconciliation in Boroondara. We are grateful to have had the opportunity to gather this rich insight and advice to inform the development of the draft Boroondara Reconciliation Strategy.

We also thank our community members from right across Boroondara, as well as community organisations and service providers who provided their reflections and ideas.

We heard there is overwhelming support for reconciliation to be progressed and strengthened in Boroondara in collaboration with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander sector and peoples, local service providers, community groups and our broader community.

Thank you to the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander sector in the Inner East who provided guidance on the development of the Strategy and for ensuring a diverse range of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander voices were heard and respected.

## **3. Message from the Mayor**

I am pleased to present the draft Boroondara Reconciliation Strategy.

The development of this Strategy represents a significant step on our reconciliation journey, building on the achievements and progress Council has accomplished in recent years.

Developed in collaboration with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, as well as feedback from the broader community, the Strategy outlines a four-year vision for reconciliation locally, and the steps we will take to achieve this.

It recognises the key role Council will play in progressing reconciliation together with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and our wider community.

The Strategy is based on the understanding that to meaningfully achieve reconciliation on a local level, we must better understand, acknowledge and respect the rich histories and cultures of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.



It highlights the importance of working in partnership and building and strengthening our relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities to progress reconciliation here in Boroondara.

The Strategy is centred on three key themes: 'Understand, Acknowledge and Respect', 'Relationships and Partnerships' and 'Governance and Leadership'. Each is supported by real actions we will collectively undertake in collaboration. These will be regularly assessed and adapted to respond to the changing needs and priorities of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities as they arise.

On behalf of Council, I thank our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander partners involved in consultations for the rich insights, advice and guidance they provided to help develop this Strategy, particularly Elders and staff from the Wurundjeri Woiwurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation. I also thank those who participated in the community consultations and contributed towards our collective vision for reconciliation in Boroondara: *to create a welcoming community where the histories, cultures, knowledges, achievements and aspirations of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples are acknowledged, respected, considered and celebrated.*

We look forward to continuing to work together with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and the broader Boroondara community as we progress reconciliation together.

Cr Garry Thompson

[Signature]

MAYOR

#### 4. Introduction

The draft Boroondara Reconciliation Strategy formalises Council's commitment to reconciliation in Boroondara.

Reconciliation is an ongoing journey which aims to bring together and strengthen relationships built on trust and respect between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and the wider Australian community. It is about helping all Australians understand our past shared history and how the past affects the lives of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples today. It is about respecting and valuing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander heritages and peoples, and aims to achieve equality in life expectancy, education, employment and other areas of disadvantage.<sup>1</sup>

The Strategy has been developed through listening to local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and organisations to understand the role Council and our

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<sup>1</sup> Reconciliation Victoria, accessed September 2021  
<http://www.reconciliationvic.org.au/reconciliation2/whatisreconciliation>

community can play in the reconciliation process. It is founded on the understanding that to progress reconciliation locally we must continue to build and develop respectful, flexible, genuine relationships built on cultural understanding and reciprocity with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and organisations. We heard that it is important for truth telling to be central to the reconciliation healing process, including acknowledging the impacts of colonisation on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in Victoria.

The Strategy provides a four-year vision and action plan for implementing reconciliation initiatives in collaboration with WWCHAC and other stakeholders in the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander sector and the broad community.

It builds on reconciliation initiatives Council is already implementing and takes into account the themes and areas for action identified through consultations with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders peoples and organisations, local community groups and the broader Boroondara community. A whole of Council approach will be adopted to deliver on the commitments in the Strategy to ensure accountability and leadership is embedded across Council.

The Strategy recognises reconciliation in Boroondara requires continuous learning by the non-Aboriginal community and the importance of showcasing the strengths and contributions of local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to the Boroondara community.

Council is committed to continue to listen and learn from WWCHAC and all local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and other stakeholders in the sector to implement this Strategy as we continue on our reconciliation journey.

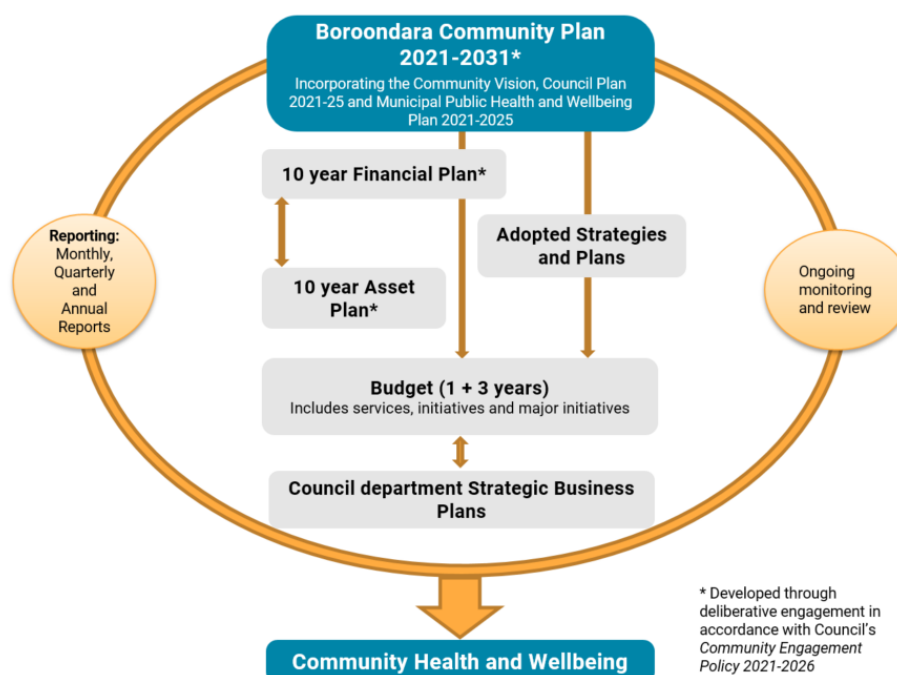
#### **4.1. Vision**

The draft Boroondara Reconciliation Strategy 2021-25 (the Strategy) supports our community's vision as outlined in Council's key strategic document, the Boroondara Community Plan 2021-31, for 'A sustainable and inclusive community'.

The vision of the Strategy is to create a welcoming community where the histories, cultures, knowledges, achievements and aspirations of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples are acknowledged, respected, considered and celebrated. The vision of the draft Strategy is also to strengthen relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations and peoples so we can work in partnership together and with our broader community to progress reconciliation locally.

#### **4.2. Corporate framework**

As shown in Figure 1, the Boroondara Community Plan (BCP) 2021-31 incorporating the 10-Year Community Vision, Council Plan 2021-25 and Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan 2021-25 is Council's key strategic document. The BCP demonstrates how we will deliver the community's aspirations while protecting, improving and promoting our community's health and wellbeing. The BCP guides Council's decision making, and directly informs the 10 year Financial Plan, 10 Year Asset Plan, the annual budget and associated reporting, as well as the Municipal Strategic Statement and Council's strategies, plans and policies.



**Figure 1:** Council's integrated planning and reporting framework

The vision, wellbeing commitment and priority themes of the BCP provide the foundation for the draft Boroondara Reconciliation Strategy. The seven priority themes of the BCP are:

- Community, Services and Facilities
- Parks and Green Spaces
- The Environment
- Neighbourhood Character and Heritage
- Moving Around
- Local Economy
- Leadership and Governance.

Implementation of actions in the draft Boroondara Reconciliation Strategy is particularly relevant to the following strategy in the BCP under Theme 7 - Leadership and Governance:

- Strategy 7.8 - Celebrate and recognise Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, knowledge and heritages through implementing initiatives in partnership with our community and stakeholders.

The draft Boroondara Reconciliation Strategy plays an important role in guiding the work across Council to ensure a strategic and coordinated approach is taken to implementing reconciliation initiatives in collaboration with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and organisations, community groups and service providers and the broader community.

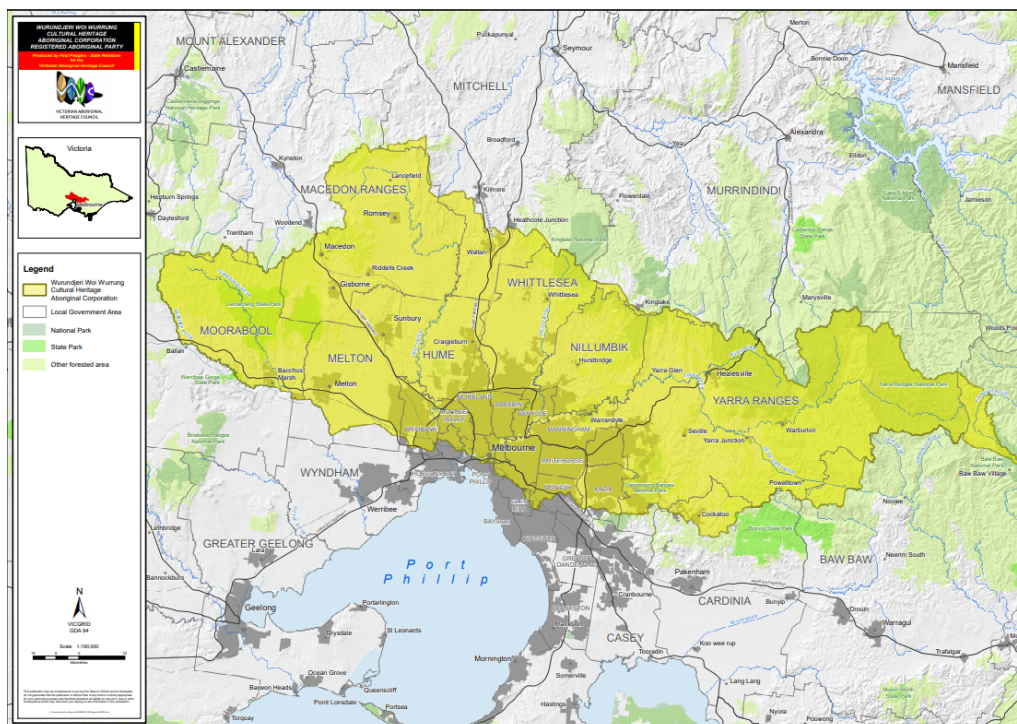
## 5. Background

### 5.1. Traditional Owners of Boroondara

The area now known as the City of Boroondara is located on the traditional lands of the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung peoples in the inner eastern suburbs of Melbourne and includes the suburbs of Ashburton, Balwyn, Balwyn North, Camberwell, Canterbury, Deepdene, Hawthorn, Hawthorn East, Kew and Kew East, and parts of Glen Iris, Surrey Hills and Mont Albert.

The City of Boroondara's name is derived from the Woi-wurrung language meaning 'where the ground is thickly shaded'. The Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung community has a strong historical, cultural and spiritual connection to their traditional lands and waterways. They continue to practice the responsibilities bestowed by their ancestors of protecting, preserving and managing the land and waterways in accordance with culture and traditions.

As shown in Figure 2 below, the WWCHAC are formally recognised through the *Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006* as the Traditional Owners for the land and waterways in Boroondara. As the Registered Aboriginal Party, the WWCHAC has important legislated roles and functions in managing and protecting the Aboriginal cultural heritage of their recognised lands including evaluating Cultural Heritage Management Plans and assessing Cultural Heritage Permit applications. They also offer key services in the community including: natural resource management services, cultural practices for events such as performing a Welcome to Country and smoking ceremonies, cultural consultations to provide feedback on projects being developed on their land, education and cultural awareness specific to their heritage and culture, and language and place naming protocols and advice.



**Figure 2:** Boundaries for the WWCHAC<sup>2</sup>

## 5.2. Cultural places in Boroondara

There are 10 Aboriginal archaeological sites within Boroondara and two Aboriginal historic places which are registered with the Victorian Aboriginal Heritage Council. The 10 archaeological sites are scarred trees, all but one of which is located within parks or reserves adjacent to the Yarra River. One toe-hold tree is located in Boroondara which is a less common type of cultural scarring which occurred when toe holds were cut into the tree to make them easier to climb when hunting for food such as possums or gathering eggs and other bush foods.<sup>3</sup> Therefore, the tree is a relatively unique site type within the municipality. The locations of the sites are confidential so they can be properly preserved and protected.

In addition to these sites, the following five cultural places in Boroondara are significant to local history and reconciliation.

### **The Canoe tree monument on Bowyer Avenue in Kew**

Its plaque commemorates a significant scarred canoe tree, estimated at the time to be more than 1000 years old, which was felled at the site in the late 1950s.

<sup>2</sup> Victorian Aboriginal Heritage Council, Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation Map 1 June 2021, accessed September 2021 [Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation | Victorian Aboriginal Heritage Council](#)

<sup>3</sup> First Peoples - State Relations, Department of Premier and Cabinet, Fact Sheet: Aboriginal Scar Trees, accessed September 2021 [Fact sheet: Aboriginal Scar Trees | First Peoples - State Relations](#)

**The Wurundjeri Trail in Chandler Reserve along the Birrarung Yarra River**

The Wurundjeri Trail, which was opened in 2017, was developed in partnership between the WWCHAC and the City of Boroondara. It showcases the Aboriginal culture and rich history of the area through a series of six interpretative signs along a 460 metre trail.

**The Wurundjeri Garden on Glan Avon Road in Hawthorn**

The Hawthorn Historical Society and Hawthorn Council (now amalgamated into the City of Boroondara) created the Wurundjeri Garden with local community members, as part of a Bush Tucker Trail in 1990. The gardens are now maintained by Council to promote Indigenous flora flowering and seeding for future regeneration and seed collection. Signage is included at the garden about the Indigenous plants.

**The Wominjeka Garden - St Oswalds, Glen Iris**

The Wominjeka Garden is a reconciliation garden developed by St Oswalds Church dedicated to the process of reconciliation with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. The gardens are open to the broad community to visit and access every day.

**The Aunty Dot Peters AM Flowering Grasslands - Swinburne University of Technology, Hawthorn Campus**

The grasslands are named after Yarra Yarra Elder Aunty Dot Peters AM and were designed by Wemba Wemba–Wergaia man, Dean Stewart.

**5.3. Profile of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders Peoples in Boroondara and Services in the Inner East**

The City of Boroondara recognises the diversity of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in Australia and those who live, work, study, play and/or volunteer locally. We also recognise Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in Boroondara each bring with them their own cultures, knowledges, histories, aspirations and achievements.

In the 2016 Census, 314 Boroondara residents identified as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander, with 293 identifying as Aboriginal and 16 identifying as Torres Strait Islander and five identifying as both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander. This was an increase of 97 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders residents since the 2011 Census and 143 since the 2006 Census. In the 2016 Census, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander residents represented 0.2% of the Boroondara population which is slightly under the proportion in Greater Melbourne (0.5%).

It is important to note historically there has been an undercount of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population in the Census so the population percentage in Boroondara is likely to be higher.

There is a significant gap between the health status of Victoria's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population and the non-Aboriginal population. Although there

have been some improvements, many areas require urgent action to improve the health, wellbeing and safety of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Victorians.<sup>4</sup>

As shown in Table 1 below, the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population in Boroondara is young, with the median age being 26 compared to 38 for the total Boroondara population.

**Table 1:** Selected demographic characteristics of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population and the total population in Boroondara based on the 2016 Census.

<b>Selected statistics</b>	<b>Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population</b>	<b>Total Boroondara population</b>
<b>Gender</b>		
Male	48%	48%
Female	52%	52%
<b>Median age</b>		
	26	38
<b>Age groups</b>		
0-4 years	7%	6%
5-14 years	11%	13%
15-24 years	27%	15%
25-34 years	20%	14%
35-44 years	13%	12%
45-54 years	10%	14%
55-64 years	6%	11%
65 years and over	8%	16%

As shown in Table 2 below, the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population in Boroondara accounts for 8.1% of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population in the Eastern Metropolitan Region (EMR).

**Table 2:** Overview of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population in the Eastern Metropolitan Region (EMR)

<b>Local Government Area</b>	<b>Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population</b>	
	<b>No.</b>	<b>%</b>
Boroondara	324	8.1%
Knox	754	19.0%
Manningham	200	5.0%
Maroondah	568	14.3%
Monash	416	10.5%
Whitehorse	358	9.0%

<sup>4</sup> Department of Health and Human Services, Korin Korin Balit-Djak: Aboriginal health, wellbeing and safety strategic plan 2017-27, accessed September 2021  
<https://www2.health.vic.gov.au/about/health-strategies/aboriginal-health/korin-korin-balit-djak>

Yarra Ranges	1,357	34.1%
<b>EMR</b>	<b>3,977</b>	<b>100%</b>

Services in the EMR specifically supporting the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and/or providing strategic policy and service advice and planning are:

- Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation – The Registered Aboriginal Party for all of Boroondara. Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Elders can be invited to perform a Welcome to Country and/or smoking ceremony on all areas of land in Boroondara.
- First Peoples - State Relations – Protects Aboriginal cultural rights and promotes the advancement of Treaty, truth and self-determination.
- Department of Families, Fairness and Housing - works with Aboriginal communities, community organisations, other government departments and mainstream service providers to improve the health, wellbeing and safety of Aboriginal people in Victoria.
- Mullum Mullum Indigenous Gathering Place – A community-controlled Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisation based in the Eastern Metropolitan Region of Melbourne. Mullum Mullum Indigenous Gathering Place is committed to retaining, promoting, and strengthening Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural identity.
- Moondani Toombadool Centre at Swinburne University – Created in 2018, the Moondani Toombadool Centre is responsible for all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander matters at Swinburne. This includes student services, teaching and learning, research, staff, culture, engagement and governance.
- Victorian Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation Inc – The peak body for Aboriginal health and wellbeing in Victoria, with 32 Aboriginal community-controlled organisations as members.
- Victorian Aboriginal Childcare Agency – A state-wide Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisation<sup>5</sup> servicing children, young people, families, and community members.
- Boorndawan Willam Aboriginal Healing Service – The lead specialist Aboriginal-specific family violence service that provides a service in the eastern metropolitan region, but also includes the inner and outer east areas.
- Reconciliation Victoria – A state-wide body that promotes reconciliation across Victoria.
- Connecting Home – A state-wide organisation committed to providing a broad range of services to survivors of the Stolen Generations.
- Boroondara Reconciliation Network – A volunteer-based group that is committed to furthering the process of reconciliation locally. The network was formed in 2017 as the successor to the Boroondara ANTAR group.

<sup>5</sup> According to the National Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation, an Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisation is 'a primary health care service initiated and operated by the local Aboriginal community to deliver holistic, comprehensive, and culturally appropriate health care to the community which controls it, through a locally elected Board of Management'.



#### 5.4. Our reconciliation journey

Council has previously recognised Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and heritages with the adoption of the Recognising Indigenous Culture and Heritage Policy 2009-13, the Reconciliation Policy and Action Plan 2004-07 and the Reconciliation Action Plan 2000-03.

Actions Council has undertaken over the last five years and continues to undertake include:

- holding regular meetings between Council officers and representatives from the WWCHAC to plan joint projects and activities
- partnering with the WWCHAC and other Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander groups to deliver special projects and activities such as the development and design of the Wurundjeri Trail at Chandler Reserve
- convening an internal working group of staff from across the organisation to plan for integrated Council activities to recognise and celebrate Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures
- holding an annual event to mark National Reconciliation Week (27 May to 3 June) or NAIDOC Week (first full week in July), including launching the Wurundjeri Trail at Chandler Reserve in 2017 in collaboration with WWCHAC; and delivering a special event for children and families in 2019 at the Greythorn Community Hub which included interactive educational activities led by Yarn Strong Sista and a performance by Women's Djirri Djirri Dance group.
- permanently flying the Aboriginal flag at the Camberwell Civic Centre and Kew Library
- programming Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander content and performers at both the Town Hall Gallery in Hawthorn and the Kew Court House
- partnering with the WWCHAC to hold Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander storytime sessions for children at libraries
- planting, maintaining and providing signage about Indigenous flora in Wurundjeri Garden in Hawthorn and Chandler Reserve
- developing an internal protocol to provide staff with guidance about giving an Acknowledgement of Traditional Owners at internal and external meetings and events
- installing a plaque outside the Council Chamber acknowledging the Traditional Owners of Boroondara
- rotating display of artwork by a well-known Aboriginal artist, Lin Onus, in the foyer at the Camberwell Civic Centre
- fulfilling Council's statutory obligations in relation to cultural heritage management under the *Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006* and *Aboriginal Heritage Regulations 2018*, by advising developers when an activity is proposed on a sensitive site, an approved Cultural Heritage Management Plan must be submitted prior to a planning permit being considered
- identifying actions in Council's internal Workforce Diversity and Inclusion Strategy 2020-22 to support recruitment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, including placement in 2021 for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander traineeship positions in Council

- consulting with the WWCHAC to develop a personalised Acknowledgement of Country for the Mayor to give at Council's Citizenship Ceremony on Australia Day 2021
- delivering an Eastern Metropolitan Region Cultural Immersion Program for Koorie Secondary Students in 2021 in partnership with the Koorie Education Support Officers at Department of Education and local councils Maroondah, Monash and Manningham.

## **5.5. Legislative and Policy Context**

The draft Boroondara Reconciliation Strategy is informed by key legislation, policies and plans at the International, Australian, Victorian and municipal levels. Outlined below is a brief overview of some of these key documents.

### **5.5.1. International**

#### United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples

The declaration establishes a universal framework of minimum standards for the survival, dignity and wellbeing of the Indigenous peoples of the world. It elaborates on existing human rights standards and fundamental freedoms as they apply to the specific situation of Indigenous peoples.

### **5.5.2. Australian Government**

#### National Agreement on Closing the Gap

The Agreement aims to enable Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and governments to work together to overcome the inequality experienced by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, and achieve equality in life outcomes. The Agreement is between the Australian, state and territory governments, the Australian Local Government Association and the Coalition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peak Organisations. As a signatory to the National Closing the Gap Agreement, the Australian Local Government Association has developed a Closing the Gap Implementation Plan which was released in September 2021 and outlines the role local government plays in supporting this work.

#### Indigenous Voice

The proposals for an Indigenous Voice would provide a way for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians to provide advice and input on matters that are important to improve their lives. The Australian Government has recently undertaken consultation with the community on the proposal made up of two parts: a National Voice and Local and Regional Voices, which would provide an avenue to work with all levels of government at a local level. The feedback from the consultation is being considered by the Indigenous co-design groups to further develop and refine the proposals so final recommendations can be made to the Australian Government.

### **5.5.3. Victorian Government**

#### Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006 and Aboriginal Heritage Regulations 2018

The purpose of the Act is to provide for the protection of Aboriginal cultural heritage in Victoria. The Regulations prescribe standards and set out the circumstances in which a Cultural Heritage Management Plan should be prepared and set fees and charges.

#### The Victorian Aboriginal Affairs Framework 2018-23

The Framework is the Victorian Government's overarching framework for working with Aboriginal Victorians, organisations and the wider community to drive action and improve outcomes for and with Aboriginal Victorians.

#### Victorian Aboriginal and Local Government Action Plan

The Action Plan provides a framework to help councils engage with Aboriginal communities and promote reconciliation. The Action Plan is currently being reviewed through an Aboriginal self-determination approach to enable a strong voice and engagement between Aboriginal communities and Victorian councils.

#### Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities 2006

The Charter sets out the basic rights, freedoms and responsibilities of all people in Victoria, including the right to culture for minority groups. Under s.19 (2) four distinct rights of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples are recognised including: the right to enjoy identity and culture; the right to maintain and use language; the right to maintain kinship ties; and, the right to maintain a distinctive spiritual, material and economic relationship with the land and waters and other resources with which there is a connection under traditional laws and customs.

#### Advancing the Treaty Process with Aboriginal Victorians Act 2018

The Act sets out a roadmap towards Treaty negotiations in Victoria between Traditional Owners and Aboriginal Victorians and the Victorian Government. The Treaty Act reflects the intent to work in genuine partnership with Aboriginal Victorians to give meaningful and practical effect to the right of self-determination.

#### The Yoo-rook Justice Commission

Yoo-rook means 'truth' in the Wemba Wemba/Wamba Wamba language, spoken in the north-west region of Victoria. The Yoo-rook Justice Commission was formally established by the Victorian Government in May 2021 as the first truth-telling body in Australia, occurring in parallel to the Treaty process. The Commission is independent from government and is aimed at facilitating truth-telling, truth listening and healing, educating the wider Victorian community, and developing recommendations for reform.

#### Korin Korin Balit-DJak - Aboriginal Health, Wellbeing and Safety Strategic Plan 2017-27

Korin Korin Balit-DJak means 'Growing very strong' in the Woi-wurrung language. It provides an overarching framework for action to improve the health, wellbeing and safety of Aboriginal Victorians. The purpose of this plan is to realise the Victorian Government's vision for 'Self-determining, healthy and safe Aboriginal people and communities' in Victoria.

## **6. Methodology**

The development of the draft Boroondara Reconciliation Strategy was informed by a number of research and consultation steps as outlined below.

**Stage 1: Reviewing Council's reconciliation initiatives**

A review was undertaken of the initiatives Council is currently undertaking and actions it has completed in the last five years to contribute to the reconciliation process. This information provided the basis for which actions could be expanded and further progressed in the Strategy.

**Stage 2: Understanding the context**

To understand the context for the draft Boroondara Reconciliation Strategy, a review was undertaken of relevant International, Australian and State legislation, policies, plans and actions. Benchmarking was also undertaken against 15 local governments, including all councils in the Eastern Metropolitan Region. The benchmarking examined the work of each council, including the structure of their reconciliation documents, language used, collaborations with stakeholders and focus areas for action. This information helped guide the structure of the draft Strategy and to assess what actions councils in a similar stage of their reconciliation journey were undertaking.

In addition, a demographic profile of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander residents in Boroondara was developed based on the 2016 Census. Furthermore, a review of the community consultation results from over 5,000 residents which informed the development of the Boroondara Community Plan 2021-31, was undertaken to identify any topics/ideas raised by residents that related to reconciliation.

**Stage 3: Advice sought from WWCHAC and key stakeholders in the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander sector**

To ensure the development of the Strategy was informed by feedback and advice from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, Council met regularly with WWCHAC and other key stakeholders.

Monthly meetings with Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Elders and staff provided an opportunity for us to get to know one another, learn how to work together, share ideas and most importantly seek advice and feedback into the consultation design and development of the draft Boroondara Reconciliation Strategy.

Advice and mentoring was also sought from other key stakeholders at regular meetings to ensure our approach is respectful, inclusive and strength based, including but not limited to, First Peoples - State Relations Group - Department of Premier and Cabinet and Inner Eastern Melbourne Area and Aboriginal Engagement at the Department of Families, Fairness and Housing.

**Stage 4: Aboriginal consultant engaged to support consultation and development of Strategy**

To provide advice on the development of the Strategy and to assist with facilitating the community consultations, Council engaged an Aboriginal consultant, Karen Milward, who is a Yorta Yorta<sup>6</sup> woman and respected in the local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. Karen was responsible for providing advice on the methodology of the consultation, facilitating and analysing data gathered from

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<sup>6</sup> Traditional Yorta Yorta lands lie on both sides of the Murray River roughly from Cohuna to Albury / Wodonga. They include towns such as Echuca, Shepparton, Benalla, Corowa and Wangaratta and extend northwards to just south of Deniliquin.

the consultation sessions with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and peoples, facilitating workshops with Council staff, and reviewing and providing recommendations and feedback on the final Strategy.

**Stage 5: Consultation with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders**

To ensure the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander voices were heard and respected and the diverse issues and priorities important to them were understood, acknowledged and considered, 14 conversation style consultation sessions were held with 24 key stakeholders in the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander sector. These sessions were facilitated by Karen Milward. The consultation sessions enabled Council to hear directly about the aspirations for reconciliation locally in Boroondara and opportunities for action and collaboration with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander sector and peoples. The rich information gathered through these sessions formed the foundation for the development of the vision, themes, strategic objectives and focus areas for action.

**Stage 6: Community and service provider pulse check surveys**

As the reconciliation process involves the non-Aboriginal community working together with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, we undertook pulse check surveys with the broad community and local community service providers and organisations to understand their views and ideas of how to be involved and progress reconciliation locally.

The online community pulse check survey was undertaken between 8 July and 1 August 2021. It captured information about why reconciliation in Boroondara is important, ideas for how Council might progress it locally, as well as respondents' level of knowledge of the histories and cultures of Aboriginal and Torres Strait peoples in Australia and Boroondara. In total, 480 respondents completed the survey.

An online survey was also undertaken between July and August 2021 targeted at a cross-section of community groups and service providers in Boroondara including arts, religious groups, educational institutions, neighbourhood houses and community groups. The purpose of the survey was to gather information about existing activities already taking place locally to support reconciliation and to gauge respondents' level of interest in engaging with Council and other organisations to progress reconciliation together. Twenty-six organisations completed the survey representing a range of community organisations and services.

**Stage 7: Strategy development**

Through the consultations with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander sector we gathered rich information about why progressing reconciliation in Boroondara is important, the key steps we can take to meaningfully contribute to it and ideas for reconciliation initiatives we can undertake in collaboration with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and the broader community. These findings strongly aligned with the outcomes from the community pulse check survey and the survey with service providers and community organisations.

We used this feedback to inform the development of the Strategy's vision, themes, strategic goals, focus areas for action and the implementation plan.

## 7. Summary of Community Consultation Findings

As noted above, three key phases of community consultations were undertaken to inform the development of the draft Boroondara Reconciliation Strategy. Outlined below is a high level summary of the key findings from the consultation with key stakeholders from the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander sector and the community pulse check survey.

It is important to note the City of Boroondara is at the beginning of its formal reconciliation journey and it may take a number of years for Council to undertake the foundational work required before it can progress some initiatives. It is also important to note some of the ideas suggested in the community consultations fall outside the scope of the work Council does. However, where appropriate Council advocates to other levels of government on particular issues or plays a role in facilitating partnerships between different groups in the community.

### 7.1 Key findings from consultations with key stakeholders in the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander sector

Analysis of the findings from the consultation sessions with the key stakeholders from the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander sector identified 14 key topics. These topics which are briefly outlined below in Table 3 capture the priorities important to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and their ideas for how Council can progress reconciliation locally. These findings have provided the foundation for the development of the vision, themes, strategic objectives and actions in this Strategy.

**Table 3:** Brief overview of the 14 topics identified through the consultation sessions with key stakeholders in the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander sector

Key topic	Brief overview
<b>Topic 1 - Improve Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural awareness within Council and in the community</b>	<p>Prioritise whole of Council and community learning about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures.</p> <p>Cultural awareness training and activities for staff, councillors and the broader community were suggested as ways to progress this work.</p>
<b>Topic 2 - Acknowledge and/or celebrate dates of significance</b>	<p>Acknowledge and/or celebrate culturally significant dates during the year and ensure Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elders and peoples are invited to lead, plan, participate and attend as guests.</p> <p>Specific annual dates of significance include: NAIDOC Week, National Reconciliation Week, National Sorry Day and Aboriginal Children's Day. Cultural immersion events and activities suggested include: storytelling sessions, book readings, yarning circles with the local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, and celebrations of the</p>

	<p>Stolen Generations resilience and achievements through art, film and guest speakers at community events.</p>
<p><b>Topic 3 - Acknowledge Traditional Owners, WWCHAC, within Council and across the municipality</b></p>	<p>Strengthen and amplify the acknowledgement of Traditional Owners in the municipality to assist in building the communities' connections to places and spaces.</p> <p>Ideas proposed for respectfully and appropriately acknowledging the Traditional Owners included using Aboriginal language to name places and spaces within the municipality, developing signage and plaques to acknowledge the Traditional Owners, flying the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander flags and including written Acknowledgements of Traditional Owners in Council's print and digital communications.</p>
<p><b>Topic 4 - Develop a better understanding of the local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and communities in Boroondara</b></p>	<p>Develop a better understanding of the local and diverse Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities to ensure Council services and programs can be delivered in a responsive, targeted and culturally safe way.</p> <p>Suggestions included developing a profile of the local Boroondara Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities beyond the ABS Census data to include information about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cohorts, residents, Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations and businesses, and people working within the City of Boroondara.</p>
<p><b>Topic 5 - Acknowledge and celebrate local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stories, histories, cultures and peoples.</b></p>	<p>Acknowledge and celebrate Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories, cultures and peoples all year round and not just during significant dates.</p> <p>Suggestions included providing spaces in the municipality which includes reflections of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and histories through visual arts or reflective landscaping. Inviting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander guest speakers from a range of backgrounds to speak at Council events throughout the year and hosting conversations with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community members and the broader community on truth telling were other ideas suggested.</p>
<p><b>Topic 6 - Strengthen relationships and collaborate with the Traditional Owners, WWCHAC</b></p>	<p>Continue to build a strong working relationship and partnership with WWCHAC.</p> <p>Potential ways suggested for continuing to strengthen relationships with the WWCHAC included continuing to meet regularly with them and formalising our way of working together.</p>

<b>Topic 7 - Establish and strengthen relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and peoples and identify opportunities for collaboration</b>	<p>The reconciliation processes and aspirations should concentrate on promoting mutually respectful and genuine two-way relationships of shared significance. Developing these can take time as strong relationships are built on trust and respect.</p> <p>The need to ensure Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and stakeholders are actively engaged in the Boroondara Reconciliation Strategy was highlighted as important.</p> <p>Ideas proposed to improve Council's engagement and communication about the delivery of the Strategy included keeping Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples informed on a regular basis, updating Council's reconciliation progress on our website, and inviting Aboriginal Community Controlled organisations to participate in local Council events and activities held throughout the year.</p>
<b>Topic 8 - Participate in the development and delivery of culturally safe spaces and places for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community members in the Inner East</b>	<p>The delivery of culturally safe spaces and places for the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities in the Inner East to meet was identified as important to practice their cultures, celebrate community achievements and promote and support cultural strengthening and connections to land, waterways and each other.</p> <p>Opportunities suggested included Council delivering programs and activities at the Mullum Mullum Indigenous Gathering Place's potential new Inner East Aboriginal Community Hub and promoting Aboriginal sites of significance in Boroondara, with approval of WWCHAC so they are easily accessible by local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.</p>
<b>Topic 9 - Identify opportunities for collaboration with local community groups, community services and schools to progress reconciliation initiatives locally</b>	<p>Facilitate collaboration with local organisations and community groups to progress reconciliation locally.</p> <p>Groups identified through the consultation which Council could collaborate with to progress reconciliation include community groups, service providers, schools and kindergartens. Opportunities proposed to support collaboration included implementing cultural awareness training and capacity building workshops and facilitating and/or supporting opportunities for community groups, organisations, educational providers and the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities to network and collaborate.</p>



<b>Topic 10 - Establish a governance structure to oversee implementation of the strategy and ensure the voices of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are heard</b>	<p>Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities' voices to be heard every step of the way in the reconciliation process, including recognition and understanding of how self-determination will drive action.</p> <p>Suggestions included the development of a formal process to provide feedback to Council as well as having more informal conversations with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders in small yarning sessions to build trust and rapport. Supporting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people's voices on other established committees and working groups of Council was also proposed.</p>
<b>Topic 11 - Promote and support the procurement of goods and services from Victorian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander businesses</b>	<p>Explore opportunities to promote and support the procurement of goods and services from Victorian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander businesses to support and create opportunities for Aboriginal employment and participation of Aboriginal businesses in the economy.</p> <p>Ideas proposed included showcasing the strengths and successes of local Aboriginal businesses and entrepreneurs.</p>
<b>Topic 12 - Promote and support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment and ensure the organisation is culturally welcoming</b>	<p>Support the employment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff.</p> <p>Suggestions included developing a workforce strategy.</p>
<b>Topic 13 - Contribute and support state-wide advocacy efforts in consultation with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders to address health inequities and the rights of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples</b>	<p>Ensure up to date social, economic, physical, and environmental data and issues occurring in the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities is maintained so Council can appropriately advocate, where required, in consultation with WWCHAC and other local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders.</p>
<b>Topic 14 - Improve accessibility to Council services and activities to ensure they are inclusive and support the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders peoples</b>	<p>Improve local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people's accessibility to Council's mainstream services, programs and activities available across the municipality.</p>

## 7.2 Key findings from the community pulse check survey

As noted earlier, the community pulse check survey captured 480 respondents' ideas about why reconciliation in Boroondara is important to them and ideas for how Council might progress it locally. The survey results provided a pulse check of the sentiment towards reconciliation in the broader Boroondara community.

Thematic analysis of the responses to the question 'Why is reconciliation in Boroondara important to you' identified 13 key themes. While the survey question did not ask whether reconciliation is important, analysis of verbatim comments found 78% of respondents expressed support for reconciliation in Boroondara when they were describing why it is important to them. Conversely, 19% of respondents stated reconciliation is not important with a further 3% not being sure about its importance.

The 13 key themes are outlined in Table 4 below. As can be seen, it is encouraging and positive to see the key themes which were identified in the community survey strongly support and align with the findings from the consultations with key stakeholders from the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.

**Table 4:** Key themes identified by survey respondents for why reconciliation in Boroondara is important to them

Theme	Count	% <sup>7</sup>
The right thing to do	124	26%
Need to acknowledge the past and ensure visibility of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples cultures and histories through education and awareness	117	24%
Justice including truth-telling, making amends and fighting unfairness	115	24%
Local communities, including Council, should lead the reconciliation process	93	19%
Respect for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples cultures	91	19%
Not important	91	19%
Recognising Traditional Owners and their unique relationship to the land	84	18%
Important for the future and shared national identity	79	16%
Building an inclusive community for all	38	8%
Healing trauma and damage	35	7%
Personal importance	33	7%
Including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' voices in decision-making	24	5%
Not sure	15	3%

<sup>7</sup> The sum is more than 100% as respondents could mention more than one theme for why reconciliation is important in Boroondara.

Survey respondents were also asked to identify the actions they would like to see Council take to progress reconciliation in Boroondara. A large number of ideas were proposed and thematic analysis of this information identified a number of broad actions. Table 5 below presents the actions nominated by at least 25 respondents (5% of the sample) which the community would like to see Council take to progress reconciliation in Boroondara. Once again, these areas for action strongly correlated with the suggested areas for action identified by the key stakeholders from the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander sectors.

**Table 5:** Suggested actions to progress reconciliation in Boroondara

Action	Count	% <sup>8</sup>
Educational and awareness-raising programs about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and histories for all age groups (e.g. dedicated website pages, special section in Council's bulletin, library resources, workshops, talks, movies, school programs etc.)	175	36%
Signs, plaques, and information boards (e.g. stories, history trails) on Council buildings and in public spaces and Aboriginal traditional names used for naming and dual language naming of buildings and open spaces (e.g. streets, parks).	138	29%
Acknowledgement of Traditional Owners/Welcome to Country at Council meetings and events and on the website and in Council's publications	107	22%
Actively engage with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples about matters that concern them	90	19%
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples led events (e.g. storytime, walks, history talks, smoking ceremony)	90	19%
Aboriginal and Torres Strait peoples involvement in Council and decision making processes	68	14%
Fly Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander flags at Council buildings	64	13%
Promote Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander art in Council buildings, public spaces and parks (e.g. sculptures, paintings, and murals)	43	9%
Provide opportunities (spaces and events) to bring together Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and the non-Aboriginal community	39	8%
Celebrate culturally important dates (e.g. National Sorry day and NAIDOC)	30	6%
Reconciliation Action Plan and other relevant policy documents	28	6%
Increase employment opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples	25	5%

<sup>8</sup> The sum is more than 100% as respondents could nominate more than one action to progress reconciliation in Boroondara.

As can be seen from the above findings there is a strong overlap of common themes and priorities from the different phases of community consultations and support from the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and the broader community to work in partnership to progress reconciliation locally.

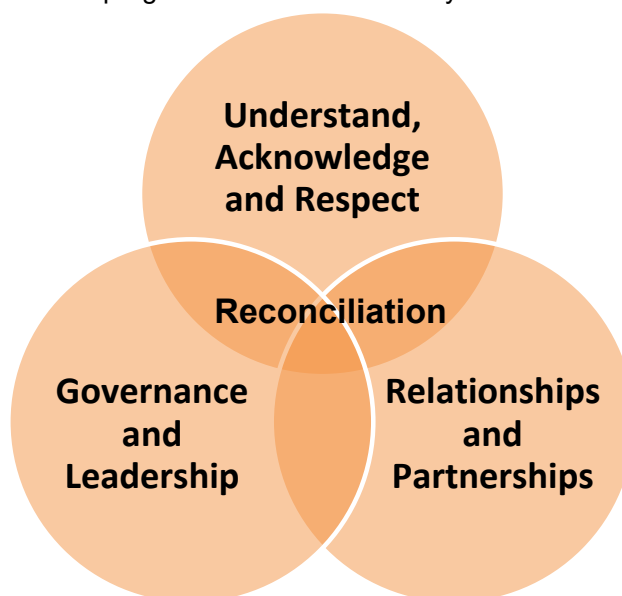
Analysis of the consultation and research undertaken to inform the development of the strategy, identified three key themes and 14 focus areas for action which form the foundation of the draft Boroondara Reconciliation Strategy and are outlined below in the following section.

## 8. Key Themes and Strategic Objectives

The Boroondara Reconciliation Strategy is based on three key themes which were strongly evident across the consultations and research which informed the development of this Strategy.

1. **Understand, Acknowledge and Respect:** *recognise that understanding, acknowledging and respecting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories, cultures and peoples is fundamental to being able to meaningfully contribute to the reconciliation process.*
2. **Relationships and Partnerships:** *acknowledges the broader community has a key role to play in progressing reconciliation and that to do this we need to develop and strengthen relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations so we can work together.*
3. **Governance and Leadership:** *working together across Council to progress reconciliation and providing opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to have a voice to inform Council decision making.*

The three key themes, which are shown in Figure 1 below, are all necessary and important to continue to progress reconciliation locally.



Under each of the three themes a Strategic Objective has been developed to outline what the community want us to achieve over the four-year period of the Strategy. Based on these objectives, a number of focus areas for action have been developed to detail what outcomes Council will seek to achieve over the next four years in pursuit of the Strategic Objective.

An implementation plan can be found at **Appendix One** which outlines the specific actions Council will take in response to the four-year areas for action below.

### **Theme 1: Understand, Acknowledge and Respect**

**Strategic Objective 1:** Build awareness and understanding of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories, cultures and peoples so we can contribute towards the reconciliation process and acknowledge and celebrate the resilience, strengths and contributions Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples make to the community.

#### **Focus areas for action:**

- a. Improve Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural awareness within Council and in the community
- b. Acknowledge and/or celebrate dates of significance to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples
- c. Acknowledge the Traditional Owners, Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation, within Council and across the municipality
- d. Council to develop a better understanding of the local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and communities in Boroondara
- e. Acknowledge and celebrate local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stories, histories, cultures and peoples.

### **Theme 2: Relationships and Partnerships**

**Strategic Objective 2:** Create and strengthen reciprocal relationships between Traditional Owners and other Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations and peoples, Council, and the broader community so we can progress reconciliation initiatives together.

#### **Focus areas for action:**

- a. Strengthen relationships and collaborate with the Traditional Owners, Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation
- b. Establish and strengthen relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and peoples and identify opportunities for collaboration
- c. Participate in the development and delivery of spaces and places for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community members in the Inner East
- d. Identify opportunities for collaboration with community groups and service providers, networks and local schools to progress reconciliation initiatives locally.

### Theme 3: Governance and Leadership

**Strategic Objective 3:** Provide a whole of Council response to reconciliation and enable the voice of Aboriginal and Torres Strait islander peoples to inform Council decision making to support equitable and inclusive opportunities and participation in the community.

**Focus areas for action:**

- a. Convene an internal Council advisory committee and stakeholder network to support implementation of the strategy
- b. Promote and support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment, volunteering and traineeship opportunities and ensure the organisation is culturally welcoming
- c. Support the procurement of goods and services from Victorian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander businesses
- d. Contribute and support state-wide advocacy efforts in consultation with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders to address health inequities and the rights of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples
- e. Ensure accessibility to Council services and activities to ensure they are inclusive and support the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders peoples.

### 9. Implementing, monitoring and evaluation

Council is committed to collaborating with the WWCHAC and other key Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders, community groups and organisations and the broader community to implement, monitor and evaluate the actions in the Boroondara Reconciliation Strategy.

To ensure the Strategy remains relevant and achievable, regular progress updates on the actions in the Strategy and feedback on the implementation of actions will be sought at Council's scheduled meetings with the WWCHAC.

In addition, Council's Internal Boroondara Reconciliation Advisory Committee has been established to provide feedback and advice to assist Council officers in relation to the development and implementation of the Boroondara Reconciliation Strategy after considering data, research and community inputs, firstly from the WWCHAC then advice from external Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations and individuals and local community agencies. At a minimum, twice a year, Elders and staff from the WWCHAC will be invited to meet with the Internal Advisory Committee to enable Council officers to present on progress and for the Advisory Committee to seek feedback on the implementation of the Strategy from the WWCHAC. Other external Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community organisations and individuals and representatives from community groups and networks will also be invited as required to provide advice to the Committee so it can meet its objectives.

Council's internal corporate reporting system will be used to monitor implementation of the Strategy's actions and will be published in Council's annual report.

**9.1. Accountabilities**

For all queries or feedback regarding this strategy, please use the contact details for the responsible department below.

Position Title	Contact number	Contact department email
Social Inclusion Policy and Project Officer	03 9278 4017	<a href="mailto:communityplanning@boroondara.vic.gov.au">communityplanning@boroondara.vic.gov.au</a>

## **Appendix One - Implementation Plan 2022-26**

The actions outlined below include actions Council will undertake in response to the findings from the consultation and research which informed the development of the Strategy. Council is committed to collaborating with WWCHAC and all local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and stakeholders to implement the Strategy. The actions will be reviewed annually to ensure they are still relevant and to identify additional actions. All actions specified in the Implementation Plan which require funds not included in Council's Strategic Resource Plan will be referred to future budget deliberations and subject to further councillors' consideration prior to implementation.

### **Theme 1: Understand, Acknowledge and Respect**

**Strategic Objective 1:** Build awareness and understanding of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories, cultures and peoples so we can contribute towards the reconciliation process and acknowledge and celebrate the resilience, strengths and contribution Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples make to the community.

#### **Focus areas for action:**

- Improve Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural awareness within Council and in the community
- Acknowledge and/or celebrate dates of significance to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples
- Acknowledge the Traditional Owners, Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation, within Council and across the municipality
- Council develop a better understanding of the local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and communities in Boroondara
- Acknowledge and celebrate local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stories, histories, cultures and peoples.



Action Number	Action	Link to BCP Theme and Strategy	Responsibility	Timeframes	Resources Required
1.	Include an Acknowledgement of Traditional Owners on all staff email blocks and Council's website.	Theme 7 - Strategy 7.8	<b>Lead:</b> Strategic Communications	2022-23	Operating budget
2.	Implement guidelines for the inclusion of Acknowledgement of Traditional Owners in Council's print and digital collateral.	Theme 7 - Strategy 7.8	<b>Lead:</b> Strategic Communications <b>Support:</b> Community Planning and Development	2022-23	Operating budget
3.	Embed Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture in mainstream Council activities throughout the municipality by raising awareness of Council staff of the Boroondara Reconciliation Strategy; the meaning of reconciliation; and the cultural protocols for giving an Acknowledgement of Traditional Owners or including a Welcome to Country at meetings and events.	Theme 7 - Strategy 7.8	<b>Lead:</b> Community Planning and Development <b>Support:</b> People, Culture and Development	2022-23	Operating Budget
4.	Assist sports clubs to become more inclusive for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples through participation in the Inclusive Clubs' Project.	Theme 1 - Strategy 1.2	<b>Lead:</b> Health and Wellbeing Services	2022-23	Operating budget
5.	Review and continue to update Council's Library catalogue to include a range of historical and contemporary perspectives of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories, cultures and experiences, including showcasing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander authors and local histories and peoples.	Theme 1 - Strategy 1.1	<b>Lead:</b> Library Services	2022-23	Operating budget

6.	Investigate including Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung language and/or acknowledging Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and peoples in the naming of new places and spaces across the municipality and within Council facilities.	Theme 7 - Strategy 7.8	<b>Lead:</b> Community Planning and Development <b>Support:</b> Chief Financial Office	2022-23	Operating budget
7.	Fly the Aboriginal flag at the Camberwell Civic Centre and Kew Library permanently and consider other locations.	Theme 7 - Strategy 7.8	<b>Lead:</b> Community Planning and Development <b>Support:</b> Arts and Culture and Facilities, Waste and Infrastructure	2022-23	Operating budget
8.	Amend Council's Placemaking Framework to incorporate a specific reference to acknowledging and celebrating Boroondara's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and histories in the public realm whether through built form, programming or activation.	Theme 7 - Strategy 7.8	<b>Lead:</b> Placemaking	2022-24	Operating budget
9.	Engage Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations through partnerships to deliver Cultural Awareness training to local community groups and organisations including neighbourhood houses, volunteers, early years' services, education professionals, sporting clubs, local businesses and other relevant groups across Boroondara.	Theme 1 - Strategy 1.2	<b>Lead:</b> Community Planning and Development <b>Support:</b> Active Ageing, Local Economies, Health & Wellbeing, Arts and Culture, Libraries, Environmental Sustainability and Open Spaces	2022-26	Operating budget
10.	Continue to convene the internal working group of staff from across Council to plan community education and cultural immersion events and activities in partnership with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations and community organisations	Theme 1 - Strategy 1.2	<b>Lead:</b> Community Planning and Development in collaboration with members of the Internal Working Group	2022-26	Operating budget

	<p>to acknowledge/celebrate a minimum of two of the following key dates of significance a year to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- National Sorry Day (26 May)</li> <li>- National Reconciliation Week (27 May - 3 June)</li> <li>- NAIDOC Week (4-11 July)</li> <li>- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children's Day (4 August).</li> </ul>				
11.	Promote Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander led events and activities to Council staff and the community such as Wurundjeri Week (2-8 August).	Theme 7 - Strategy 7.8	<b>Lead:</b> Community Planning and Development	2022-26	Operating budget
12.	Support and build the capacity of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations, community groups and individuals to apply for Council's community grants to improve health and wellbeing, increase participation and support community strengthening, including Individual Participation Grant; Individual Achievement Grants; Community Arts Venue Grants; Annual Community Strengthening Grants; Small Grants (Biannual) and Triennial Operation Grants.	Theme 1 - Strategy 1.2	<b>Lead:</b> Community Planning and Development	2022-26	Operating budget
13.	Investigate opportunities to develop a new individual creative grant program for young Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people aged 12-25 years to financially support their professional development in the arts, culture and music industries.	Theme 1 - Strategy 1.2	<b>Lead:</b> Arts and Culture	2022-23	Operating budget

14.	Engage with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander artists and creative industries to deliver artworks, exhibitions, performances and initiatives inspired by local Aboriginal histories, cultures and stories in public spaces, Council owned facilities and at cultural events.	Theme 1 - Strategy 1.3	<b>Lead:</b> Arts and Culture <b>Support:</b> Placemaking	2022-26	Operating budget
15.	Engage with the Traditional Owners and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders when Council undertakes 'placemaking' initiatives to transform important public spaces and in the design and development of public realm works in Council's activity centres, with the aim of promoting awareness and celebration of local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures.	Theme 6 - Strategy 6.4	<b>Lead:</b> Placemaking and Strategic and Statutory Planning	2022-26	Operating budget
16.	Program Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander artists in the Boroondara Arts program.	Theme 1 - Strategy 1.3	<b>Lead:</b> Arts and Culture	2022-26	Operating budget
17.	Continue to program Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander authors and speakers at library events and activities.	Theme 1 - Strategy 1.2	<b>Lead:</b> Library Services	2022-26	Operating budget
18.	Showcase the diverse botanical displays of Australian plants at Maranoa Botanic Gardens, adjoining Beckett Park and Wurundjeri Garden to the community to provide insights into Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander heritages.	Theme 2 - Strategy 2.4	<b>Lead:</b> Environmental Sustainability and Open Spaces	2022-26	Operating budget
19.	Integrate native plants into public spaces and gardens across the municipality where appropriate.	Theme 2 - Strategy 2.4	<b>Lead:</b> Environmental Sustainability and Open Spaces	2022-26	Operating budget

20.	Investigate a series of Aboriginal heritage sites for interpretive heritage markers which over time could form a City-wide trail.	Theme 4 - Strategy 4.2	<b>Lead:</b> Local Economies <b>Support:</b> Capital Projects and Environmental Sustainability and Open Spaces	2024-26	Budget bid required
21.	Develop guidelines with advice and feedback from Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation around the use of signage to acknowledge Traditional Owners in Council buildings and sites of cultural significance in the City.	Theme 7 - Strategy 7.8	<b>Lead:</b> Strategic Communications <b>Support:</b> Community Planning and Development and Environmental Sustainability and Open Spaces	2023-24	Operating budget
22.	Conduct an assessment of staff's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural understanding to identify learning needs and improve cultural safety in the workplace.	Theme 7 - Strategy 7.8	<b>Lead:</b> People, Culture and Development <b>Support:</b> Community Planning and Development	2023-24	Operating budget
23.	Embed opportunities to collaborate with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations to celebrate and promote culture, family, community and Country with children, young people and families.	Theme 7 - Strategy 7.8	<b>Lead:</b> Health and Wellbeing Services	2023-24	Operating budget
24.	Support local businesses and community groups to consider the use of signage and messaging which creates welcoming environments to help them attract Boroondara's diverse customers including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.	Theme 6 - 6.1	<b>Lead:</b> Local Economies <b>Support:</b> Community Planning and Development	2024-26	Operating budget
25.	Engage Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations to deliver Cultural Awareness Training for Council staff and Councillors to deepen their	Theme 7 - Strategy 7.8	<b>Lead:</b> People, Culture and Development and	2024-25	Budget bid required

	understanding and capacity to meaningfully contribute to reconciliation.		Community Planning and Development <b>Support:</b> Governance		
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## Theme 2: Relationships and Partnerships

**Strategic Objective 2:** Create and strengthen reciprocal relationships between Traditional Owners and other Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations and peoples, Council and the broad community so that we can progress reconciliation initiatives together.

### Focus areas for action:

- Strengthen relationships and collaborate with the Traditional Owners, Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation
- Establish and strengthen relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and peoples and identify opportunities for collaboration
- Participate in the development and delivery of culturally safe spaces and places for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community members in the Inner East
- Identify opportunities for collaboration with local schools, community groups and community services to progress reconciliation initiatives locally.

Action Number	Action	Link to BCP Theme and Strategy	Responsibility	Timeframes	Resources Required

26.	Strengthen relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations that operate or support children and young people across Boroondara.	Theme 7 - Strategy 7.8	<b>Lead:</b> Health and Wellbeing Services	2022-23	Operating budget
27.	Elevate the use of Wurundjeri Trail as a gathering place for local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.	Theme 7 - Strategy 7.8	<b>Lead:</b> Community Planning and Development <b>Support:</b> Environmental Sustainability and Open Spaces	2022-24	Operating budget
28.	Facilitate regular meetings with Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation to seek advice on the implementation of the Boroondara Reconciliation Strategy, to formalise how we work together and identify opportunities for collaboration.	Theme 7 - Strategy 7.8	<b>Lead:</b> Community Planning and Development	2022-26	Operating budget
29.	Work with Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung to identify opportunities to share and apply their traditional knowledge to Natural Resource Management within Boroondara, where appropriate.	Theme 3 - Strategy 3.6	<b>Lead:</b> Environmental Sustainability and Open Spaces <b>Support:</b> Community Planning and Development	2022-26	Operating budget
30.	Attend existing local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander led-networks to facilitate relationship building, understanding of sector needs and identify collaboration opportunities to explore.	Theme 7 - Strategy 7.8	<b>Lead:</b> Community Planning and Development	2022-26	Operating budget
31.	Collaborate with Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation to develop a digital flyer about the Wurundjeri Trail at Chandler Reserve	Theme 2 - Strategy 2.3	<b>Lead:</b> Environmental Sustainability and Open Spaces and Community	2023-24	Budget bid required

	and deliver Elder led cultural trail walks annually for the broad community.		Planning and Development		
32.	Facilitate opportunities for engagement and exchanges that deepen cultural understanding and build relationships and respect between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations and culturally and linguistically diverse groups including the Boroondara Interfaith Network.	Theme 7 - Strategy 7.8	<b>Lead:</b> Community Planning and Development	2022-2023	Operating budget
33.	Develop an e-newsletter to update and inform Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and the broad community about the implementation of the Boroondara Reconciliation Strategy.	Theme 7 - Strategy 7.8	<b>Lead:</b> Community Planning and Development	2022-26	Operating budget

### Theme 3: Governance and Leadership

**Strategic Objective 3:** Provide a whole of Council response to reconciliation and enable the voice of Aboriginal and Torres Strait islander peoples in Council decision making to support equitable and inclusive opportunities and participation in the community.

#### Focus areas for action:

- Convene an internal Council advisory committee and stakeholder network to support implementation of the strategy
- Promote and support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment, volunteering and traineeship opportunities and ensure the organisation is culturally welcoming
- Support the procurement of goods and services from Victorian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander businesses
- Contribute and support state-wide advocacy efforts in consultation with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders to address health inequities and the rights of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples



- Improve accessibility to Council services and activities to ensure they are inclusive and support the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders peoples

Action Number	Action	Link to BCP Theme and Strategy	Responsibility	Timeframes	Resources Required
34.	Incorporate components of Aboriginal cultural awareness in the staff wellbeing calendar, as appropriate.	Theme 7 - Strategy 7.3	<b>Lead:</b> People, Culture and Development	2022-23	Operating budget
35.	Develop a guide that will support different departments across Council to build their capacity and networks to appropriately engage with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community sector in the Inner East.	Theme 7 - Strategy 7.4	<b>Lead:</b> Community Planning and Development	2022-23	Operating budget
36.	Contribute to a culturally safe environment in which the diverse and unique identities and experiences of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people are respected and valued in accordance with Council's Child Safe Policy March 2021.	Theme 1 - Strategy 1.2	<b>Lead:</b> Health and Wellbeing Services	2022-23	Operating budget
37.	Raise awareness of Council's commitment in its Procurement Policy to promote the attraction of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people enterprises.	Theme 7 - Strategy 7.2	<b>Lead:</b> Chief Financial Office	2022-23	Operating budget
38.	Develop and implement an internal guide for respectful and culturally appropriate use of language and images of Traditional Owners and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.	Theme 7 - Strategy 7.8	<b>Lead:</b> Strategic Communications <b>Support:</b> Community Planning and Development	2023-24	Budget bid required
39.	Build a better understanding of Council staff identifying as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander to inform future employment and professional development opportunities.	Theme 7 - Strategy 7.3	<b>Lead:</b> People, Culture and Development	2023-24	Operating Budget

40.	Fulfil statutory obligations in relation to cultural heritage management under the <i>Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006</i> and <i>Aboriginal Heritage Regulations 2018</i>	Theme 4 - Strategy 4.3	<b>Lead:</b> Strategic and Statutory Planning	2022-26	Operating budget
41.	In collaboration with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander sector advocate where required on health and wellbeing issues which are important to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.	Theme 7 - Strategy 7.5	<b>Lead:</b> Community Planning and Development	2022-26	Operating budget
42.	Convene the Internal Boroondara Reconciliation Advisory Committee to oversee the implementation of the Boroondara Reconciliation Strategy and invite Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Elders and staff to attend a minimum of two meetings a year.	Theme 7 - Strategy 7.1	<b>Lead:</b> Community Planning and Development	2022-26	Operating budget
43.	Convene the Boroondara Reconciliation Stakeholder Network with local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and Council staff to identify opportunities to collaborate, share information, increase cultural understanding, strengthen reciprocal relationships and deliver actions as part of the Boroondara Reconciliation Strategy.	Theme 7 - Strategy 7.8	<b>Lead:</b> Community Planning and Development	2022-26	Operating budget
44.	Increase the accessibility of volunteering opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples by building the capacity of Volunteer Involving Organisations to engage Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander volunteers and provide face-to-face and other services to support these groups to participate.	Theme 1 - Strategy 1.2	<b>Lead:</b> Community Planning and Development	2022-24	Operating budget
45.	Assist Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community organisations to recruit and support volunteers through the Boroondara Volunteer Resource Centre.	Theme 1 - Strategy 1.2	<b>Lead:</b> Community Planning and Development	2022-26	Operating budget

46.	Develop and implement an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment strategy.	Theme 7 - Strategy 7.3	<b>Lead:</b> People, Culture and Development	2024-26	Budget bid required
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Attachment 2: Summary of high level findings from Boroondara Reconciliation Strategy community consultations

# Summary of high level findings from Boroondara Reconciliation Strategy community consultations

September 2021

**Responsible Directorate:** Community Support



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## 1. Introduction

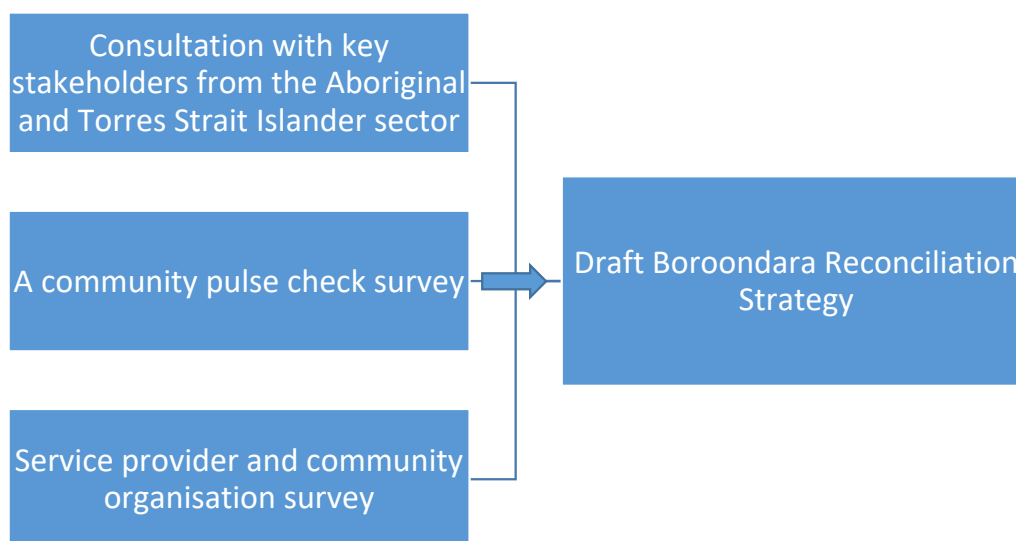
This report presents the high level findings from the community consultations undertaken between July and August 2021 to inform the development of the draft Boroondara Reconciliation Strategy 2022-26.

The draft Boroondara Reconciliation Strategy provides Council with a vision for reconciliation in the municipality and set out a clear roadmap and framework for implementing reconciliation initiatives in the community. It includes a four year action plan outlining our existing commitments and identifies a program of additional actions which will continue to contribute to the reconciliation process locally and in partnership with our community.

The community consultations included three phases as shown in Figure 1 and outlined below:

- **Phase 1** - targeted consultation sessions with key stakeholders from the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander sector
- **Phase 2** - a community pulse check survey
- **Phase 3** - a survey of a select group of community organisations and service providers from different sectors.

The community consultations were supported by the analysis of information from a range of other sources including relevant policies and legislation of other levels of government and benchmarking against other local councils reconciliation policies and actions.



**Figure 1:** Overview of the three phases of community consultation undertaken to inform the development of the draft Boroondara Reconciliation Strategy

The objectives of the community consultations were to:

- ensure the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities' voices were heard and respected and the important issues and priorities were understood, acknowledged and considered
- facilitate authentic relationship building and strengthening between the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities' sector and the City of Boroondara
- understand the vision for reconciliation in Boroondara and how residents, community groups, service providers and organisations would like to collaborate with Council and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities to progress and celebrate reconciliation in our municipality
- recommend appropriate strategies and actions Council can include in its draft Boroondara Reconciliation Strategy to progress reconciliation locally and in partnership with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and the broader community and organisations.

This report provides an overview of each phase of consultation and who participated, along with a summary of the key findings from each phase. The overall key findings from the consultations, as well as information from a range of other sources including benchmarking and a review of relevant policies and legislation, informed the development of the draft Boroondara Reconciliation Strategy.

It is important to note the City of Boroondara is at the beginning of its formal reconciliation journey and it may take a number of years for Council to undertake the foundational work required before it can progress some initiatives. It is also important to note some of the ideas suggested in the community consultations fall outside the scope of the work Council does. However, where appropriate Council can advocate to other levels of government on particular issues or play a role in facilitating partnerships between different groups in the community.

## **2. Phase 1 - Consultation with key stakeholders from the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander sector**

To ensure the development of the draft Boroondara Reconciliation Strategy was informed by feedback and advice from key Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders, 14 conversation style consultation sessions were held online during July and August 2021 with 24 key stakeholders in the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander sector.

The consultation sessions were facilitated by a consultant, Karen Milward, who is a Yorta Yorta<sup>1</sup> woman. Karen also provided advice on the drafting of the Strategy.

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<sup>1</sup> Traditional Yorta Yorta lands lie on both sides of the Murray River roughly from Cohuna to Albury / Wodonga. They include towns such as Echuca, Shepparton, Benalla, Corowa and Wangaratta and extend northwards to just south of Deniliquin.

The consultation sessions enabled Council to hear directly from a diverse range of key stakeholders from the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander sector about their aspirations for reconciliation locally in Boroondara and opportunities for action and collaboration with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander sector and peoples.

## 2.1 Phase 1 - Who did we hear from?

As noted above, 24 people took part in the 14 consultations sessions including an Aboriginal resident and representatives from 13 organisations, including but not limited to the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation, First Peoples - State Relations Group - Department of Premier and Cabinet, Inner East Melbourne Area and Aboriginal Engagement Team, Department of Families, Fairness and Housing and the Boroondara Reconciliation Network.

## 2.2 What did the key stakeholders from the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander sector tell us?

The conversations with the key stakeholders from the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander sector provided rich insights into the needs and aspirations of their communities. During these sessions a lot of ideas were raised and many opportunities identified about how Council could work with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and peoples, community organisations and service providers and the broader community to progress reconciliation locally.

The analysis of the consultation findings identified 14 key topics which are outlined in Table 1 below. It is important to note that the below represents a high level summary of the key topics captured during the consultations. Further details will be provided to relevant areas of Council and our partners to help inform their action planning over the four years of the Strategy.

**Table 1:** Brief overview of the 14 topics identified through the consultation sessions with key stakeholders from the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander sector

Key topic	Brief overview
<b>Topic 1 - Improve Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural awareness within Council and in the community</b>	<p>Prioritise whole of Council and community learning about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures.</p> <p>Cultural awareness training and activities for staff, councillors and the broader community were suggested as ways to progress this work. Topics proposed included the impacts of colonisation, Stolen Generations, truth telling, treaty, learning about the importance and meaning behind a Welcome to Country and Acknowledgement of Traditional Owners, and cultural protocols.</p>



<b>Topic 2 - Acknowledge and/or celebrate dates of significance</b>	<p>Acknowledge and/or celebrate culturally significant dates during the year and ensure Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elders and peoples are invited to lead, plan, participate and attend as guests.</p> <p>Specific annual dates of significance include: NAIDOC Week, National Reconciliation Week, National Sorry Day and Aboriginal Children's Day.</p> <p>Cultural immersion events and activities suggested included: storytelling sessions, book readings, yarning circles with the local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, and celebrations of the Stolen Generations resilience and achievements through art, film and guest speakers at community events.</p>
<b>Topic 3 - Acknowledge Traditional Owners, Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation, within Council and across the municipality</b>	<p>Strengthen and amplify the acknowledgement of Traditional Owners in the municipality to assist in building the communities' connections to places and spaces. An Acknowledgement of Traditional Owners pays respect to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as the Traditional Owners and custodians of the land and is central to progressing reconciliation.</p> <p>Ideas proposed for respectfully and appropriately acknowledging the Traditional Owners included using Aboriginal language to name places and spaces within the municipality, developing signage and plaques, flying the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander flags and including written Acknowledgements of Traditional Owners in Council's print and digital communications.</p>
<b>Topic 4 - Develop a better understanding of the local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and communities in Boroondara</b>	<p>Develop a better understanding of the local and diverse Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities to ensure Council services and programs can be delivered in a responsive, targeted and culturally safe way.</p> <p>Suggestions included developing a profile of the local Boroondara Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities beyond the ABS Census data to include information about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cohorts, residents, Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations<sup>2</sup> and businesses, and people working within the City of Boroondara.</p>

<sup>2</sup> According to the National Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation, an Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisation is 'a primary health care service initiated and operated by the local Aboriginal community to deliver holistic, comprehensive, and culturally appropriate health care to the community which controls it, through a locally elected Board of Management'.

<b>Topic 5 - Acknowledge and celebrate local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stories, histories, cultures and peoples.</b>	<p>Acknowledge and celebrate Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories, cultures and peoples all year round and not just during significant dates.</p> <p>Suggestions included providing spaces in the municipality which includes reflections of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and histories through visual arts or reflective landscaping. Inviting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander guest speakers from a range of backgrounds to speak at Council events throughout the year and hosting conversations with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community members and the broader community on truth telling were other ideas suggested.</p>
<b>Topic 6 - Strengthen relationships and collaborate with the Traditional Owners, Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation</b>	<p>Continue to build a strong working relationship and partnership with Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation.</p> <p>Potential ways suggested for continuing to strengthen relationships with the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation included continuing to meet regularly with them and formalising our way of working together.</p>
<b>Topic 7 - Establish and strengthen relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and peoples and identify opportunities for collaboration</b>	<p>The reconciliation process and aspirations should concentrate on promoting mutually respectful and genuine two-way relationships of shared significance. Developing these can take time as strong relationships are built on trust and respect.</p> <p>The need to ensure Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and stakeholders are actively engaged in the Boroondara Reconciliation Strategy was highlighted as important.</p> <p>Ideas proposed to improve Council's engagement and communication about the delivery of the strategy included keeping Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples informed on a regular basis, updating Council's reconciliation progress on our website, and inviting Community Controlled Aboriginal organisations to participate in local Council events and activities held throughout the year.</p>
<b>Topic 8 - Participate in the development and delivery of culturally safe spaces and places for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community members in the Inner East</b>	<p>The delivery of culturally safe spaces and places for the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities in the Inner East to meet was identified as important to practice cultures, celebrate community achievements and promote and support cultural strengthening and connections to land, waterways and each other. They also offer spaces and places for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders to feel safe in expressing their opinions and for their voices to be heard.</p>

	<p>Opportunities suggested included Council delivering programs and activities at the Mullum Mullum Indigenous Gathering Place's potential new Inner East Aboriginal Community Hub and promoting Aboriginal sites of significance in Boroondara, with approval of Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation, so they are easily accessible by local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.</p>
<p><b>Topic 9 - Identify opportunities for collaboration with local community groups, community services and schools to progress reconciliation initiatives locally</b></p>	<p>Facilitate collaboration with local organisations and community groups to progress reconciliation locally.</p> <p>Groups identified through the consultation which Council could collaborate with to progress reconciliation initiatives include community groups, service providers, schools and kindergartens. Opportunities proposed to support collaboration included implementing cultural awareness training and capacity building workshops and facilitating and/or supporting opportunities for community groups, organisations, educational providers and the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities to network and collaborate.</p>
<p><b>Topic 10 - Establish a governance structure to oversee implementation of the strategy and ensure the voices of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are heard</b></p>	<p>Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities' voices to be heard every step of the way in the reconciliation process, including recognition and understanding of how self-determination will drive action. As Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities are not homogenous, it is important to hear from many voices.</p> <p>Suggestions included the development of a formal process to provide feedback to Council as well as having more informal conversations with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders in small yarning sessions to build trust and rapport. Supporting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people's voices on other established committees and working groups of Council was also proposed.</p>
<p><b>Topic 11 - Promote and support the procurement of goods and services from Victorian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander businesses</b></p>	<p>Explore opportunities to promote and support the procurement of goods and services from Victorian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander businesses to support and create opportunities for Aboriginal employment and participation of Aboriginal businesses in the economy.</p> <p>Ideas proposed included showcasing the strengths and successes of local Aboriginal businesses and entrepreneurs.</p>
<p><b>Topic 12 - Promote and support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment and ensure the organisation is culturally welcoming</b></p>	<p>Support the employment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff.</p> <p>Suggestions included developing a workforce strategy, which could outline different opportunities for recruiting and retaining Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff within Council.</p>

<b>Topic 13 - Contribute and support state-wide advocacy efforts in consultation with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders to address health inequities and the rights of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples</b>	Ensure up to date social, economic, physical, and environmental data and issues occurring in the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities is maintained so Council can appropriately advocate, where required, in consultation with Wurunderji Woi-wurrung Cultural Heritage and other local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders.
<b>Topic 14 - Improve accessibility to Council services and activities to ensure they are inclusive and support the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders peoples</b>	Improve local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people's accessibility to Council's mainstream services, programs and activities available across the municipality.

### 3. Phase 2 - Community pulse check survey

As the reconciliation process involves the non-Aboriginal community working together with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, Council undertook an online community pulse check survey which was open to the broader Boroondara community. The survey was open from 8 July to 1 August 2021 and was hosted on the Engage Boroondara website. The survey was open to all Boroondara residents, as well as people who work, visit, play or study in Boroondara.

Due to COVID-19 restrictions, data collection was conducted exclusively through the online survey and opportunities to participate in the survey were widely promoted through Council's communications channels including the Boroondara Bulletin and utilising our networks and e-newsletters. In addition, targeted social media posts were used to reach a diverse cross section of our community.

The survey aimed to take a pulse check with the community to assess the community's awareness of Aboriginal and Torres Islander histories and cultures and the community's views on why reconciliation is important in Boroondara and how we can progress it locally. The survey included the following two open ended questions:

1. Why is reconciliation in Boroondara important to you?
2. What specific actions would you like Council to take to progress reconciliation locally?

It also asked respondents to rate their level of knowledge about the histories and cultures of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in Australia and Boroondara and to note whether they knew who the Traditional Owners are in Boroondara.

## 2.1 Phase 2 - Who did we hear from?

Overall, 480 respondents completed the online survey. Due to COVID-19 restrictions coinciding with the survey, an online mode of data collection was used.

The survey results provided a pulse check of the sentiment towards reconciliation in the broader Boroondara community. As can be seen in the table below, 12 respondents (2% of the sample) were from people who identify as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander origin, which is higher than the overall proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander residents in Boroondara (0.16%).

It is encouraging and positive to see the key themes which were identified in the community survey strongly support and align with the findings from the consultations with key stakeholders from the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.

**Table 2:** Demographic overview of the total sample for the broad community survey

Demographic category		Sample proportion	Count	Total
Gender	Male	29%	138	480
	Female	63%	303	
	Prefer to self-describe	1%	6	
	Prefer not to say	7%	33	
Age	12-17	1%	4	480
	18-24	1%	6	
	25-34	8%	38	
	35-49	24%	113	
	50-59	19%	92	
	60-69	20%	96	
	70-84	21%	101	
	85 and over	1%	7	
	Prefer not to say	5%	23	
Parent of a child 12 years old or younger	Yes	19%	92	480
	No	75%	362	
	Prefer not to say	5%	26	
Are you of Aboriginal or Torres	Yes, Aboriginal	2%	11	480
	Yes, Torres Strait Islander	0%	0	

<b>Strait Islander origin?</b>	Yes, both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander	0.2%	1	
	No	92%	440	
	Prefer not to say	6%	28	

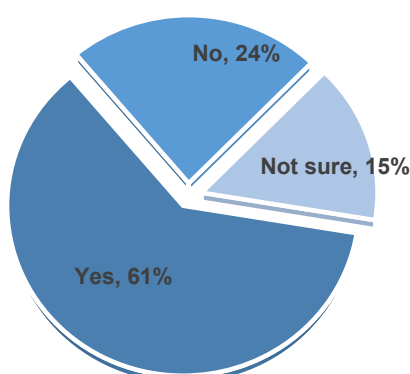
## 2.2 Phase 2 - What did the community tell us?

Outlined below is a summary of the key findings from the broad community survey for each question.

### 3.2.1 Awareness of the Traditional Owners of Boroondara

As shown in Figure 2 below, nearly two-thirds of respondents (61%) stated they know who the Traditional Owners of Boroondara are while 24% of respondents reported they did not know and an additional 15% reporting they were 'not sure' (Figure 2).

**Do you know who the Traditional Owners are in Boroondara?**



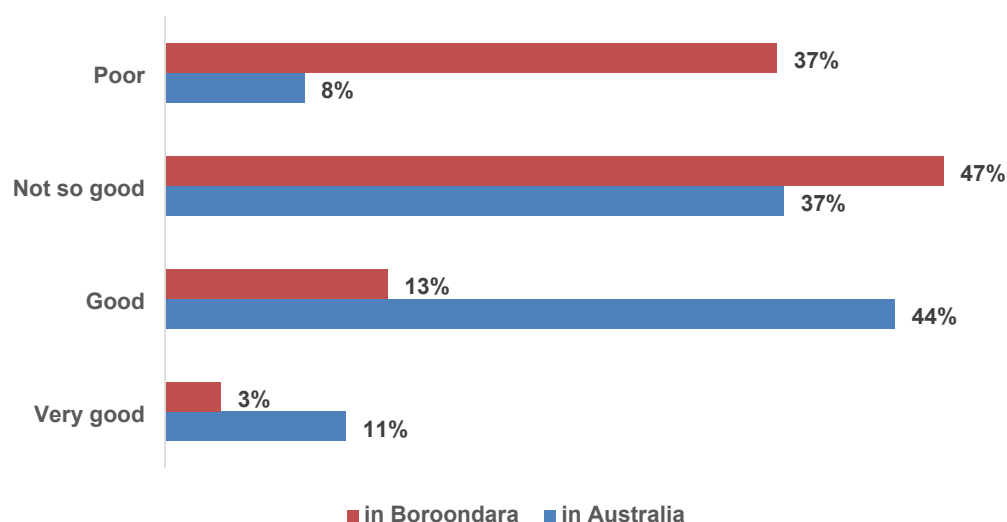
**Figure 2:** Self-reported knowledge about the Traditional Owners in Boroondara

### 3.2.2 Self-reported level of knowledge about the histories and cultures of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples

Self-reported levels of knowledge about the histories and cultures of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in Australia and Boroondara varied significantly among respondents as shown in Figure 3 below. While just over half of the respondents (55%) reported their level of knowledge as either 'very good' or 'good' about the histories and cultures of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in Australia, only 16% did so for histories and cultures of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in Boroondara.

The overwhelming majority of respondents (84%) reported their knowledge about histories and cultures of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in Boroondara as 'poor' or 'not so good'.

**How would you rate your knowledge about the histories and cultures of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples:**



**Figure 3:** Self-reported knowledge about the histories and cultures of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in Australia and Boroondara

### 3.2.3 Why is reconciliation in Boroondara important to our community?

When respondents were asked 'Why is reconciliation in Boroondara important to you', a variety of ideas and opinions were expressed. All comments were thematically analysed, which resulted in 13 key themes being identified as shown in Table 3 below. As can be seen, these themes strongly align with the topics identified in the consultations with key stakeholders from the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander sector.

While the survey question did not ask whether reconciliation is important, analysis of verbatim comments found 78% of respondents expressed support for reconciliation in Boroondara. Conversely, 19% of respondents stated reconciliation is not important with a further 3% of respondents not being sure about its importance.

**Table 3:** Themes identified by survey respondents for why reconciliation in Boroondara is important

Theme	Count	% <sup>3</sup>
The right thing to do	124	26%
Need to acknowledge the past and ensure visibility of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples cultures and histories through education and awareness	117	24%
Justice: truth-telling, making amends, fighting unfairness	115	24%
Local communities, including Council, should lead the reconciliation process	93	19%
Respect for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples cultures	91	19%
Not important	91	19%
Recognise Traditional Owners and their unique relationship to the land	84	18%
Important for the future and shared national identity	79	16%
Building an inclusive community for all	38	8%
Healing trauma and damage	35	7%
Personal importance	33	7%
Include Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' voices in decision-making	24	5%
Not sure	15	3%

### 3.2.4 Proposed actions for Council to progress reconciliation in Boroondara

A 'top of mind' approach was used to gather the community's ideas about what actions Council can take to progress reconciliation in Boroondara. Rather than presenting a list of potential actions and asking the community to express their approval, the survey asked an open-ended question which allowed the community to provide a wider variety of comments without being constrained by a list of suggestions. These answers were then coded and organised in broader action categories the community would like to see Council take to progress reconciliation in Boroondara, as presented in the Table 3 below.

Importantly, while the 'top of mind' approach allows us to identify a wider spectrum of actions, it often results in lower frequency of identified actions. Thus, the reported frequencies below should not be interpreted as the approval rate of identified actions. For example, flying Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander flags - which was nominated by 13% of respondents may be more frequently chosen by respondents if this was offered in a multiple choice question.

<sup>3</sup> The sum is more than 100% as respondents could mention more than one theme for why reconciliation is important in Boroondara.



Table 4, below, presents the actions nominated by at least 25 respondents (5% of the sample). Once again, these areas for action strongly correlated with the suggested areas for action identified by the key stakeholders from the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander sectors.

**Table 4:** Suggested actions to progress reconciliation in Boroondara

Action	Count	% <sup>4</sup>
Educational and awareness-raising programs about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and histories developed for all age groups (e.g. dedicated website pages, special section in Council's bulletin, library resources, workshops, talks, movies, school programs etc.)	175	36%
Signs, plaques, and information boards (e.g. stories, history trails) on Council buildings and in public spaces and Aboriginal traditional names used for naming and dual language naming of buildings and open spaces (e.g. new streets, parks)	138	29%
Acknowledgement of Country/Welcome to Country at Council meetings and events and on the website and in Council publications	107	22%
Actively engage with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples about matters that concern them	90	19%
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples-led events e.g. storytime, walks, history talks, smoking ceremony	90	19%
Aboriginal and Torres Strait peoples involvement in Council and decision making processes	68	14%
Fly Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander flags at Council buildings	64	13%
Promote Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander art in Council buildings, public spaces and parks (e.g. sculptures, paintings, murals etc.)	43	9%
Provide opportunities (spaces and events) to bring together Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and the non-Aboriginal community	39	8%
Celebrate culturally important dates (e.g. National Sorry day, NAIDOC etc.)	30	6%
Reconciliation Action Plan and other policy documents	28	6%
Increase employment opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.	25	5%

<sup>4</sup> The sum is more than 100% as respondents could nominate more than one action to progress reconciliation in Boroondara.

#### **4. Phase 3 - Service provider and community organisation survey**

An important part of the development of the Strategy was to deepen our understanding of existing activities already taking place across the municipality to support reconciliation at a local level.

To do this we invited a select group of community organisations and services providers to complete an online survey during July and August 2021. By inviting a select number of organisations to complete the survey enabled us to develop an understanding of activities happening in arts groups, religious groups, educational institutions, neighbourhood houses, early years' services, health and wellbeing services and community groups. It also enabled us to gauge the level of interest of respondents in forming partnerships or collaborating with Council and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders to further support reconciliation in Boroondara.

##### **4.1 Phase 3 - Who did we hear from?**

In total, we heard from 26 local services providers and community organisations representing different sectors including:

- arts (1)
- church (2)
- community groups (i.e. health and welfare service) (4)
- kindergarten (3)
- long day care (1)
- neighbourhood house/ community centre (3)
- toy library (1)
- historical society (4)
- school (3)
- seniors groups (4).

##### **4.2 Phase 3 - What did the service providers and community organisations tell us?**

The findings from the survey indicated service providers and community organisations in Boroondara are active in delivering a range of local reconciliation initiatives. These include:

- celebrating/acknowledging significant cultural days (e.g. Sorry Day, National Reconciliation Week, NAIDOC Week)
- providing cultural awareness training for staff
- placements of signs or a plaques acknowledging Traditional Owners
- flying the Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander flags – either permanently or for specific occasions
- giving a Welcome to Country or Acknowledgment of Country at assemblies, meetings, programs and special events

- giving a Welcome to Country or Acknowledgement of Country in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders languages
- attending meetings and networks with key stakeholders from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.

In addition, some services/groups noted they have been delivering innovative and creative initiatives in collaboration with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations including:

- projects focused on music/songs in Australian Aboriginal languages
- projects responding to prevention of violence against women
- excursions to cultural places of significance
- inviting local Aboriginal speakers to present
- embedding Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives into early years/school curriculums
- Indigenous planting and bush tucker programs
- creative artworks.

Most importantly, all service providers/community groups expressed their interests to collaborate with Council and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders to further progress reconciliation in Boroondara.

## **5. Conclusion**

The three phases of community consultation to inform the development of the draft Boroondara Reconciliation Strategy gathered rich insights and ideas for how reconciliation can be progressed in the City of Boroondara. The consultations also identified there is strong support both from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders, service providers, community organisations and the broader community to work together to progress it locally.

The topics and ideas raised through the consultations with key stakeholders from the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander sector and the community were strongly aligned and these were used to inform the development of the vision, themes, strategic objectives and actions in the draft Boroondara Reconciliation Strategy.

As noted earlier, it is important to note the City of Boroondara is at the beginning of its reconciliation journey and it may take a number of years for Council to undertake the foundational work required before it can progress some initiatives. It is also important to note some of the ideas suggested in the community consultations fall outside the scope of the work Council does.

As this report provides an overview of the key findings from the consultation, more specific ideas for actions will be provided to the relevant Council departments to inform the development of their actions over the four years of the Strategy.

To ensure the Boroondara Reconciliation Strategy reflects the voices of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities that were heard during the

consultations, Council will continue to seek feedback from the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation and other key advisors during the process of developing and implementing the draft Strategy.