



## 2023 Highlights



Deliverables complete or moderate level of outcomes achieved.



### Respect

- ✓ Council's decision to cease holding citizenship ceremonies on 26 January.
- ✓ Council's Notice of Motion to support Treaty.
- ✓ Council's commitment to profile and celebrate the arts and culture of the First Nations community through Arts and Culture Strategy including:

#### The First Nations Creators Program

2023 recipients Na Djinang Circus presented "Of The Land on Which We Meet," exploring country acknowledgment, and Jody Haines with Zoë Brown-Holten and Amelia O'Leary showcased "Against the Wind," an immersive installation.

#### NAIDOC Week

Songlines Music Aboriginal Corporation engaged to curate First Nations musicians as part of Council's Amplify Program for NAIDOC Week. Performers included Monica Jasmine Karo, a proud Gunai and Gunditjmara woman and Monica Weightman, a proud Murri woman.

#### Art commissions

- Lillardia Park public artwork commission created by Bitja (Dixon Patten), a Yorta Yorta, Gunai, Gunditjmara and Dhudhuroa / Jaithmathang artist and graphic designer.
- Illuminate Footscray a light-based artwork to be created by Wiradjuri and Ngannawal artist, Brook Andrew.
- StreetWORKS Footscray CBD public artwork project a collaboration between Maribyrnong Council and the State Government for nine new street art murals.



### Relationships

- ✓ **Best Start Initiative**  
Three quality improvement cycles (PDSA's) were conducted to integrate Indigenous perspectives into kindergarten programs.
- ✓ **Participation in Early Years Aboriginal Services of the West Network:** key focus on knowledge exchange and best practice.
- ✓ **Indigenous Cultural Competency Training**  
Victoria Aboriginal Community Services Association VACSAL delivered Indigenous Cultural Competency to the Best Start partnership, including representatives from Early Years, Maternal and Child Health, Department of Education, and Early Years Managers.



### Opportunities

- ✓ The Wurundjeri Land Council's advisory role in the Town Hall's development.
- ✓ The Wurundjeri and Bunurong Land Councils expertise provided to shape the new Heritage Strategy, set for endorsement in 2024.



### Governance, tracking progress and reporting

- ✓ Recruitment of Council's First Nation's Officer.

## Reconciliation Action Plan 2023 Annual Report



### Relationships



50%

of all deliverables  
achieved in 2023



21

deliverables  
complete or in progress



33

actions and  
activities undertaken

01

Maribyrnong Reconciliation Action Plan Advisory Committee (MRAPAC) monitors Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) development and implementation of actions, tracking progress and reporting.

#### Deliverable

#### Status

Annually review and update the MRAPAC Terms of Reference and ensure that they are available through Council's website.

- The Terms of Reference (ToR) were reviewed with no changes required. The ToR were available on Council's website during 2023. However, in 2023, the Advisory Committee was not active.



RAP development and implementation of actions, tracking progress and reporting by responsible Council Officers.

- Council officers have continued to implement and track actions and progress of the RAP. However, in 2023, the Advisory Committee was not active, and therefore unable to monitor the implementation of the RAP.



Ensure that at least half of all members of MRAPAC identify as First Nations Peoples, and there are designated positions for Traditional Owner representation.

- Whilst the Committee has yet to be activated, the ToR clearly state a minimum of 50% of committee members are to be First Nations.



MRAPAC meets four times per year.

- In 2023, Council did not have a committee in place. In 2024, a new committee will be established.



## 02

**Celebrate and participate in National Reconciliation Week (NRW) by providing opportunities to build and maintain relationships between First Nations Peoples and other Australians.**

Deliverable	Status
Work with external organisations to deliver an external event for NRW each year.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>In 2023, Council held a calendar of events for Reconciliation Week and NAIDOC Week including Braybrook Library hosting a Treaty community forum, story time sessions across the libraries, and a bus trip to the Narana Aboriginal Cultural Centre in Geelong.</li> </ul>
Continue annual support of Wominjeka Festival.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Footscray Community Arts Centre held the festival in 2021 and will no longer host Wominjeka Festival.</li> </ul>
Coordinate an internal awareness raising / information project for NRW each year.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A Mayoral video and social media campaigns were used in 2023 to raise awareness for NRW.</li> <li>Council's website also featured NRW information, enhancing our efforts to promote reconciliation.</li> </ul>
Circulate Reconciliation Australia's (RA) resources to Council staff and display in reception areas.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Following the appointment of the new First Nations Officer, Council has focused on visibility of First Nations through display of resources and materials.</li> <li>Council meeting rooms and community rooms display Aboriginal flags.</li> <li>Council offices also display First Nations art, books and other items.</li> </ul>
Register all events via Reconciliation Australia and Reconciliation Victoria's NRW website.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>National Reconciliation Week events were not recorded on the NRW website in 2023.</li> </ul>
Ensure that MRAPAC members and staff participate in an external event to recognise and celebrate NRW.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Staff were informed of events across the region.</li> </ul>

## 03

**Develop and maintain mutually beneficial relationships with First Nations Peoples, communities and organisations to support positive outcomes.**

Deliverable	Status
Include Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders in engagement.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>First Nations representation on Council's Advisory Committees.</li> <li>Wurundjeri Land Council's advisory role in the Town Hall's development.</li> <li>Wurundjeri and Bunurong Land Councils have been pivotal in shaping the new Heritage Strategy, set for endorsement in 2024.</li> </ul>

Deliverable	Status
Ensure that First Nations Peoples and their voices are represented and heard at all significant Council events and consultations.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• First Nations representation on Council's Advisory Committee.</li> <li>• Representation of First Nations Peoples and their voices is a priority for Council events and consultations.</li> <li>• In 2023, consultations regarding January 26 resulted in the decision not to hold citizenship ceremonies on that date</li> <li>• Citizenship ceremonies now include a Welcome to Country.</li> <li>• Programming of First Nations artists 'The Merindas' as part of Council's signature event NYE Fireworks Event in Footscray Park.</li> </ul>
Develop and implement an engagement plan to work with our First Nations stakeholders.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• During late 2023, Council officers prioritised building and strengthening engagement with key First Nations stakeholders. In 2024, we are committed to further developing and implementing a specific engagement plan.</li> </ul>
Meet with local First Nations organisations to develop guiding principles for future engagement.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The First Nations Officer active engagement with local Aboriginal organisations is pivotal in building essential connections, laying the groundwork for the development of guiding principles in 2024. This process emphasises the importance of establishing mutual trust and understanding for effective collaboration.</li> </ul>

## 04

### Raise internal and external awareness of our RAP to promote reconciliation across our business and sector.

Deliverable	Status
Develop and implement a strategy to communicate our RAP to Council staff and external stakeholders.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Throughout 2023, Council has communicated through staff bulletins, the website, Community Centres and Libraries, ensuring broad dissemination to both internal staff and external stakeholders.</li> </ul>
Promote reconciliation through ongoing active engagement with stakeholders.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Throughout 2023, Council officers have built and strengthened relationships with key stakeholders.</li> <li>• Council has supported the Voice to Parliament.</li> <li>• Council has endorsed a Council Report ceasing holding citizenship ceremonies on 26 January.</li> </ul>
Communicate updates on progress via staff and Councillor bulletins.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Progress updates have been communicated through meetings with staff, featured in staff bulletins, and included in an annual report to Council.</li> </ul>
Include an overview of the RAP as part of staff and Councillor induction processes.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Council has initiated planning for both a staff and Councillor induction for the RAP.</li> </ul>

05

Develop partnerships with the western region local governments and agencies to improve outcomes and raise awareness of issues affecting First Nations Peoples.

Deliverable	Status
Develop joint initiatives in partnership with other western region local government agencies and relevant agencies including the Local Aboriginal Network and Reconciliation Victoria.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The MAV RAP Special Interest Group has been activated and Maribyrnong City Council are active participants in this network. Joint initiatives will be planned for 2024.</li> </ul>
In collaboration with other western region local governments organise a western region RAP forum to share best practice.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A forum was not held in 2023.</li> </ul>

06

Promote positive race relations through anti-discrimination strategies.

Deliverable	Status
Conduct a review of HR policies and procedures to identify existing anti-discrimination provisions, and future needs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Council has an Equal Opportunity Policy that emphasises respect in the workplace.</li> <li>The People and Capability team, along with the Inclusive Communities First Nations team, have established regular meetings to ensure that planning, review, and consultation are standard processes for policy and procedure reviews, including identifying anti-discrimination provisions and future needs.</li> </ul>
Development, implement and communicate an anti-discrimination policy for the organisation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Council has the Respect in the Workplace Policy and procedure which clearly details anti-discrimination.</li> </ul>
Engage with First Nations staff and advisors to consult on our anti-discrimination policy.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The First Nations Officer continues to work with HR and provide advice on policies.</li> </ul>
Educate senior leaders on the effects of racism.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>RacismNotWeclome campaign continued to be active in 2023.</li> </ul>



## Respect



56%

of all deliverables achieved in 2023



15

deliverables complete or in progress



19

actions and activities undertaken



**07** Protect and share the stories of Aboriginal sacred sites and culturally sensitive areas in collaboration with Traditional Custodians and their communities.

### Deliverable

### Status

Encourage the development of unique and distinctive public spaces and places, including art spaces, which reflect, respond to and acknowledge that Maribyrnong is part of the traditional lands of the Kulin Nation ('First Peoples First' theme in the Arts and Culture Strategy).

- This occurs in many ways through First Nations involvement in the design of the Town Hall redevelopment Civic Green and;
- Significant art pieces such as the Lillardia Park public artwork.



Display Acknowledgement of Country on all future city gateway signs and on significant civic buildings. Working group to plan incremental implementation process.

- In 2023, Council buildings, Community Centres and Libraries displayed the Aboriginal flag and Torres Strait Islander flag, as well as a Acknowledgement of Country.
- Major art pieces across Council also include acknowledgement to First Nations.
- In 2024, Council officers are planning to include City gateway acknowledgement.



**08** Engage employees in continuous cultural learning opportunities to increase understanding and appreciation of First Nations Peoples cultures, histories and achievements.

### Deliverable

### Status

Conduct a review of cultural learning needs within Council along with a cultural safety audit.

- Project initiated, but not progressed in 2023 due to changes in staffing.





Deliverable	Status
Work with local Traditional Custodians and or First Nations consultants to develop cultural awareness training.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Late 2023, Council officers initiated a project to build and strengthen cultural awareness.</li> </ul>
Provide opportunities for MRAPAC members, leadership staff and Councillors to participate in cultural awareness training.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Late 2023, Council officers initiated a project to build and strengthen cultural awareness.</li> </ul>
Implement Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural awareness training strategy for staff and include both face to face and online training opportunities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Development of a strategy for cultural awareness training commenced in 2023, ready for implementation in 2024.</li> </ul>
Investigate local cultural immersion opportunities and experiences.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Part of the cultural awareness development training includes the opportunity for participation in cultural immersion.</li> </ul>



**Engage employees in understanding the significance of First Nations Peoples cultural protocols, such as Welcome to Country and Acknowledgement of Country, to ensure there is a shared meaning.**

Deliverable	Status
Develop and deliver Council's protocol document for Acknowledgement to Country and Welcome to Country for all staff and community members.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Council has developed an approved Acknowledgement which is on the website, in endorsed strategies and on email signatures. In 2024, Council will strengthen this work through the development of a protocol document.</li> </ul>
Develop a list of key contacts for organising a Welcome to Country and maintaining respectful partnerships.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Council has established and is strengthening its key contacts for Welcome to Country.</li> </ul>
Engage a Traditional Custodian to provide a Welcome to Country at significant events, including National Reconciliation Week and NAIDOC Week celebrations.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Council has formalised its commitment to providing a Welcome to Country at citizenship ceremonies as well as other significant events, including key festivals and activations.</li> </ul>
Raise the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander flags and provide information about Australia's First Peoples at citizenship ceremonies.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Citizenship ceremonies include the Aboriginal and ATSI flags and a Welcome to Country by an Elder.</li> </ul>
Encourage Council staff to include an Acknowledgement to Country at the commencement of all meetings.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Staff are encouraged to include an Acknowledgement to County at the commencement of meetings.</li> </ul>

10

**Provide opportunities for First Nations staff to engage with their cultures and communities by celebrating NAIDOC Week.**

Deliverable	Status
Provide opportunities for all First Nations staff to participate with their cultures and communities during NAIDOC Week and other culturally significant days.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This is supported and there is also a Cultural Leave Policy that supports participation in culturally significant days. ●</li> </ul>
Ensure that First Nations staff are aware of Council’s ceremonial and cultural leave provisions and that there are no barriers to them participating in NAIDOC Week or other activities or significant days.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This is supported by Council through the Leave Policy. ●</li> </ul>
Promote and encourage participation in external NAIDOC events to all staff.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Staff are encouraged to participate in NAIDOC events. ●</li> <li>• The staff bulletin provided information to staff on NAIDOC events. ●</li> </ul>
MRAPAC to participate in external NAIDOC Week events.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Due to the committee not being active, this action was not applicable. N/A</li> </ul>





## Opportunities



79%

of all deliverables  
achieved in 2023



11

deliverables  
complete or in progress



17

actions and  
activities undertaken

11

Investigate opportunities to improve and increase First Nation Peoples employment outcomes within our workplace.

### Deliverable

### Status

Develop and implement processes for the collection and management of data from First Nations applicants and staff to inform future workforce planning.

- Council does not currently have a recruitment system that enables the collection and management of data. Review and specifications for a new system that is capable of these requirements have commenced in 2023, with implementation planned for 2024.



Develop and implement a First Nation Peoples Employment and Retention Strategy.

- Council has progressed the use of external First Nations recruitment services.



Review HR and recruitment procedures and policies to ensure there are no barriers to First Nations employees and future applicants participating in our workforce.

- Council has commenced reviewing and updating the Recruitment and Selection Policy. An updated policy is due in 2024. Inclusive Communities First Nations team have participated in the consultation.



Develop and implement First Nations Peoples employment pathways (e.g. traineeships and internships).

- Learning and Development Framework and Policy has been developed.



Provide and promote professional development opportunities to First Nations staff.

- Professional development opportunities have been provided to First Nations staff.



## Deliverable

## Status

Advertise job vacancies to effectively reach First Nations stakeholders.

- Job vacancies have been advertised on external First Nations recruitment websites.
- With the introduction of the new First Nations Officer in late 2023, we have initiated planning and exploration of strategies to effectively reach First Nations People in job vacancies.
- Collaboration with HR continues, and in 2024, we will trial new approaches to enhance our outreach efforts.



Increase the percentage of First Nations People employed in our workforce.

- Investigation into this action highlights that Council does not yet have the systems and process required to effectively understand if Council is increasing the percentage of First Nations People employed. With the implementation of a new HR system in 2024, this can be actioned.



## 12 Investigate opportunities to incorporate First Nations supplier diversity within Council's procurement processes.

## Deliverable

## Status

Review and update procurement policies and procedures to ensure there are no barriers for procuring goods and services from First Nations businesses.

- Council's Procurement Policy was reviewed, updated and endorsed by Council in October 2021.
- The current Procurement Policy does not have any barriers for procuring goods, services and works from First Nations business.



Develop and communicate to staff a list of First Nations businesses that can be used to procure goods and services.

- Completed in 2022.
- Will become business as usual and be updated regularly.



Investigate a possible commercial relationship with a First Nations owned business.

- Not yet commenced.



Investigate Supply Nation membership.

- Not yet commenced.



13

Support early years learning centres to foster a higher level of knowledge and pride in First Nations Peoples histories, cultures and contributions.

**Deliverable**

**Status**

Encourage early years learning centres and schools in the City of Maribyrnong to engage with the Narragunnawali: Reconciliation in Schools and Early Learning Narragunnawali program.

- Early Years sector has participated in cultural awareness training and also participate in Early Years Aboriginal Services of the West Network.
- First Nations events are shared with all Early Years childhood Centres.



14

Support the protection and recognition of Aboriginal cultural heritage.

**Deliverable**

**Status**

In consultation with relevant Registered Aboriginal Parties identify and assess places of Aboriginal cultural heritage significance for open space and urban renewal projects, where required, as per the Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Act.

- Council is currently developing a new Heritage Strategy due for completion in 2024, with First Nations as a focus.



Update the Maribyrnong Planning Scheme to reinforce the importance of protecting paces of Aboriginal cultural heritage.

- The State Government made reforms in 2018 which elevated Aboriginal cultural heritage in all planning schemes. In December 2023 Council endorsed Amendment C184 to implement a new Planning Policy Framework. Amendment C184 changes include elevating policy and providing a framework for further protection and conservation of Aboriginal cultural heritage. Council is awaiting a decision from the Minister for Planning regarding Amendment C184.
- In March 2023 Council endorsed a submission supporting the nomination of 73 Southampton Street Footscray – William Cooper’s house – to the Victorian Heritage Register (State heritage protection).





## Governance, tracking progress and reporting



50%

of all deliverables achieved in 2023



7

deliverables complete or in progress



7

actions and activities undertaken

15

Report RAP achievements, challenges and learnings internally and externally.

### Deliverable

### Status

Publicly report Council's RAP achievements, challenges and learnings through Council's website and intranet.

- Council prepares an annual report card and shares this on the website.



Report RAP progress to all staff and senior leaders quarterly.

- Council prepares an annual report card and will develop a new process for reporting and communicating RAP progress in 2024.



16

Report RAP achievements, challenges and learnings to Reconciliation Australia.

### Deliverable

### Status

The RAP working group to collect data for the RAP Impact Measurement questionnaire (IMQ).

- This has not yet commenced. This is planned for 2024.



The RAP working group to seek internal approval to submit the RAP Impact Measurement questionnaire to Reconciliation Australia.

- This action is not applicable until the data collection IMQ has been finalised.

N/A

Investigate participating in the RAP Barometer.

- This action has not yet commenced. Consideration for this action item will commence in 2024.



Complete and submit the annual RAP Impact Measurement questionnaire to Reconciliation Australia.

- This action is not applicable until the data collection IMQ has been finalised.

N/A

17

## Provide appropriate support for effective implementation of RAP commitments.

Deliverable	Status
Define resource needs for RAP implementation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Consideration of required resources was completed in 2023 which included the appointment of a First Nations Officer.</li> </ul>
Engage our senior leaders and other staff in the delivery of RAP commitments.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Senior leaders have been engaged in the delivery of the RAP.</li> </ul>
Define and maintain appropriate systems to track, measure and report on RAP commitments.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A system for tracking and reporting on the RAP has been initiated.</li> </ul>
Appoint and maintain an internal RAP Champion from senior management.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Manager of Inclusive Communities and Director Community Services.</li> </ul>

18

## Review, refresh and update RAP.

Deliverable	Status
Liaise with Reconciliation Australia to develop a new RAP based on learnings, challenges and achievements.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>This did not occur in 2023 due to staff changes in key roles. Liaison with Reconciliation Australia will re-commence in 2024.</li> </ul>
Send draft RAP to Reconciliation Australia for review and feedback.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>This action is not applicable as the development of a new RAP with Reconciliation Australia has not yet commenced.</li> </ul>
Submit draft RAP to Reconciliation Australia for formal endorsement.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>This action is not applicable as the development of a new RAP with Reconciliation Australia has not yet commenced.</li> </ul>

19

## Identify community attitudes in the role of Council in promoting a positive sense of community and inclusivity of First Nations Peoples.

Deliverable	Status
Develop an engagement strategy to lead conversations with First Nations Peoples and the broader Maribyrnong community. Report on the process.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Council has a Community Engagement Policy which supports and promotes engagement and includes First Nations People.</li> </ul>