

Maroondah Innovate Reconciliation Action Plan 2018 to 2020 Year 1 Report

Working towards a vibrant and culturally rich community





Original artwork for the front cover by Aunty Daphne Milward

Artist biography - Aunty Daphne Milward

Aunty Daphne Milward is a strong Yorta Yorta Woman and a positive role model for all within the local and broader Indigenous community. Through her role as a community Elder, she supports the Mullum Mullum Indigenous Gathering Place (MMIGP) Community Art Space by encouraging young and beginning artists to express themselves through painting.

Aunty Daphne possesses a strong sense of cultural connection and shares her cultural experiences with the community through her support of the MMIGP Culture Group. Her long list of achievements include Board Member of Native Title Services; Director of Victoria's Women's Trust; Committee Member of Koori Women Mean Business; Member of the Equal Opportunity Commission; and work at the Aborigines Advancement League.

In the featured artwork, Maroondah City Council is represented at the centre of the artwork, with the offshoots showing the many different cultures that Council works with.

The leaves depict those used by the Wurundjeri tribe in their Welcome ceremonies and the pods portray the potential partnerships arising from the Reconciliation Action Plan, as well as showing the linking of different cultures with the Wurundjeri.



Aunty Daphne Milward



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Acknowledgment of Country

We, in the spirit of Reconciliation, acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of the land now known as the City of Maroondah, where Indigenous Australians have performed age old ceremonies. We acknowledge and respect their unique ability to care for Country and their deep spiritual connection to it. We pay our respects to their Elders, past, present and emerging.



Introduction



Council is pleased to present the *Maroondah Innovate Reconciliation Action Plan 2018 to 2020: Year 1 Report* to the community.

The *Maroondah Innovate Reconciliation Action Plan 2018 to 2020* is a strategic plan that describes how Council will work towards Reconciliation in partnership with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders. The Plan was adopted in 2019 and endorsed by Reconciliation Australia under the 'Innovate' framework. This framework is for organisations that have developed relationships with their Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and are ready to develop or implement programs for cultural learning, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment and supplier diversity.

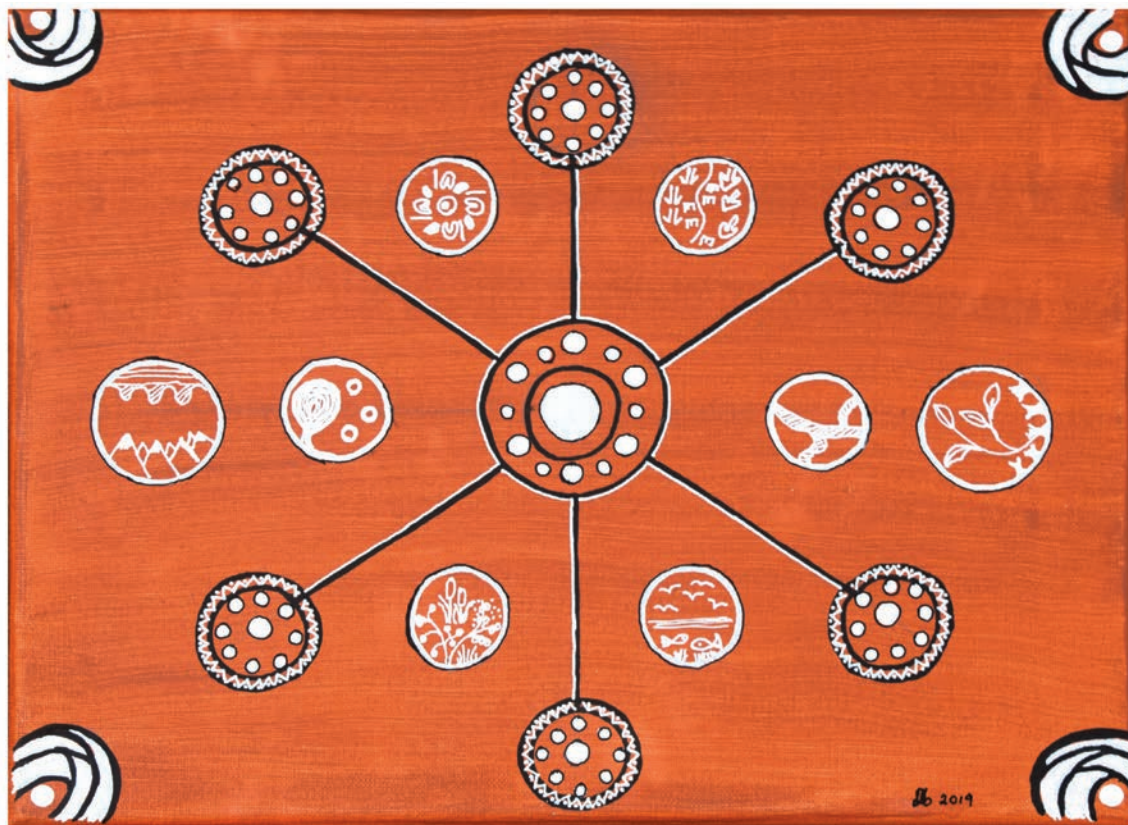
This report highlights the achievements throughout the first year of the plan (2018/19) over the next 12 months. Council will continue to work with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders to implement and evaluate the *Maroondah Innovate Reconciliation Action Plan 2018 to 2020*.

Implementation highlights

Some of Council's implementation highlights from Year 1 of the *Maroondah Innovate Reconciliation Action Plan 2018 to 2020* include:

- Successful endorsement of the *Arts and Cultural Development Strategy 2020 to 2025* which integrates a range of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural directions.
- Maroondah Occasional Care has developed a Reconciliation Action Plan specific to their centre which will assist to embed Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture into their programs
- A highly successful National Reconciliation Week program was delivered in partnership with Mullum Mullum Indigenous Gathering Place and Maroondah Movement for Reconciliation. This provided an excellent opportunity to formally launch the *Maroondah Innovate Reconciliation Action Plan 2018 to 2020*.

Maroondah Innovate Reconciliation Action Plan 2018 to 2020



Original artwork by Aunty Daphne Milward

The *Maroondah Innovate Reconciliation Action Plan 2018 to 2020* (MRAP) is a strategic plan that describes how Council will work towards Reconciliation in partnership with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders. It describes our vision, principles and focus areas for working towards Reconciliation in Maroondah. It also identifies a range of key partners represented in the MRAP Working Group and who Council will work with to enhance the validity of Reconciliation actions as outlined in the strategy.

The MRAP sits within the overall Maroondah Integrated Planning Framework which is underpinned by the shared long-term community vision outlined in *Maroondah 2040 - Our future together*.

The development of the MRAP was a Priority Action within the *Council Plan 2017-2021* and works towards the Maroondah 2040 community outcome of an inclusive and diverse community.

The vision for this outcome is that:

Maroondah is an inclusive community where social connections are strong across generations and diversity is embraced and celebrated.

The following Council strategies and plans have objectives that support the delivery of the MRAP:

- *Maroondah Health and Wellbeing Plan 2017-2021*
- *Children's Plan 2015-2019*
- *Arts and Cultural Development Strategy 2014-2018*
- *Active and Healthy Ageing initiative - towards an age-friendly Maroondah 2015-2020*
- *Disability Policy and Action Plan 2019-2021*
- *Open Space Strategy 2016*
- *Physical Activity Strategy 2015-2020*
- *Maroondah Planning Scheme*.



Weaving workshop led by Mullum Mullum Indigenous Gathering Place Elder, Aunty Irene Norman.



Focus Area 1: Relationships

Preparations underway for working group

Although currently unable to meet due to COVID-19 pandemic restrictions, progress has been made in preparation for the first *Maroondah Innovate Reconciliation Action Plan 2018 to 2020* (MRAP) working group meeting, currently scheduled for October 2020 (pending changes to municipal lockdowns and social distancing restrictions). This progress has included the development of the Draft Terms of Reference and the collation of departmental reporting on year 1 of the MRAP. Both items will be reviewed at the first working group meeting.

Relevant action items:

- 1.1.2 Review Terms of Reference for the MRAP Working Group.
- 1.1.3 Conduct two working group meetings annually.

Strengthening relationships with local organisations

Mullum Mullum Indigenous Gathering Place (MMIGP) have been represented in several working groups across Council and have regularly contributed to consultation for many years. This relationship has been broadened and strengthened in the last 12 months with the increased connection of relevant MMIGP representatives to Council officers and teams involved in identified areas of service delivery. Council has also supported investment logic mapping workshops to assist with Victorian Government funding application for future accommodation for MMIGP.

Relevant action items:

- 1.3.1 Meet with local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations to develop guiding principles for future engagement

Celebrating National Reconciliation Week

National Reconciliation Week is a time for people of all ages to come together and strengthen relationships between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people.

A highly successful event was held at Mullum Mullum Indigenous Gathering Place (MMIGP) on 28 May 2019 and was developed collaboratively with the Reconciliation Week Working Group comprising Council, representatives from MMIGP and Maroondah Movement for Reconciliation. The MRAP was officially launched at this event by the then Mayor, Cr Rob Steane.

Despite National Reconciliation Week 2020 occurring during the COVID-19 pandemic, Council worked in partnership with MMIGP and the Maroondah Movement for Reconciliation to deliver a series of virtual Reconciliation Week events.

These events included a live-streamed performance by singer/songwriter Kutcha Edwards, an interactive online Q&A panel focused on addressing key Reconciliation issues and a live stream of award-winning documentary "In My Blood It Runs" hosted by MMIGP. Council also worked closely with MMIGP to produce a video highlighting the importance of Reconciliation in Maroondah which was released on its social media channels.

Relevant action items:

- 1.2.1 Organise a minimum of one internally lead National Reconciliation Week initiative per annum, delivered collaboratively with representatives from the MRAP Working Group
- 1.2.2 Register National Reconciliation Week events via Reconciliation Australia's National Reconciliation Week website
- 1.2.3 Support an external National Reconciliation Week event
- 1.2.4 Ensure the MRAP Working Group participates in an external event to recognise and celebrate National Reconciliation Week
- 1.4.2 Conduct an official MRAP launch event



Promotion of Reconciliation exceeding targets

A number of Reconciliation activities were promoted by Council throughout the year, both internally and externally via news articles, website, social media, electronic newsletters to residents, the internal CEO video, and internal communication to employees. These activities greatly exceed the minimum expectation currently outlined in the MRAP.

Relevant action items:

- 1.4.3 Promote Reconciliation inclusive of a minimum of one media release/news article per annum



*Smoking Ceremony at Reconciliation Week 2019,
Mullum Mullum Indigenous Gathering Place.*



Focus Area 2: Respect

Traditional Landowners recognised

Acknowledgment of Traditional Landowners continues to be implemented widely across Council events, including Council meetings; Citizenship ceremonies; Maroondah Carols; and Australia Day and National Reconciliation Week events. Where appropriate, Traditional Landowners are invited to perform Welcome to Country ceremonies to further highlight the significance of Reconciliation at events, such as at the Maroondah Festival.

Relevant action items:

- 2.2.1 Continue to implement and promote the Council's Acknowledgement of Traditional Landowners and Welcome to Country Protocol at all civic events and Council meetings
- 2.2.2 Invite a Traditional Owner to provide a Welcome to Country at significant events, including Australia Day Citizenship Ceremony

Cultural recognition at Realm extension

Council, in consultation with Mullum Mullum Indigenous Gathering Place, are exploring opportunities for the recognition of Indigenous culture in various Council buildings and outdoor projects. The Realm extension is one such project that provides an exciting opportunity for the integration of cultural recognition.

Relevant action items:

- 2.2.4 Arts and Cultural Development will work with Assets to ensure that opportunities for cultural recognition in Council buildings is considered

Acknowledgment of Country protocol

A review and revision of Council's Acknowledgement of Country Protocol and associated statements was also completed during 2019/20. The Protocol provides clear and up-to-date guidelines about Council's responsibilities and commitment to formally recognising Traditional Owners at events, meetings and in Council strategic documents. The revised Protocol and statements reflect the current status of traditional custodianship on the land now known as Maroondah, whilst more strongly referencing the connection of culture to country.

Relevant action items:

- 2.2.1 Continue to implement and promote the Council's Acknowledgement of Traditional Landowners and Welcome to Country Protocol at all civic events and Council meetings
- 2.2.2 Invite a Traditional Owner to provide a Welcome to Country at significant events, including Australia Day Citizenship Ceremony
- 2.2.3 Encourage staff to include an Acknowledgement of Country at the commencement of meetings
- 2.2.5 Develop a list of key contacts for organising a Welcome to Country and maintaining respectful partnerships
- 2.5.6 Include an Aboriginal Acknowledgement in all Council key strategic documents

Aboriginal flag to be permanently displayed in Council Chambers

The Aboriginal flag is on permanent display in the Council Chambers.

Relevant action items:

- 2.5.2 Arrange to permanently display the Aboriginal flag in the Council Chambers.

Local community groups represented at Maroondah Festival

At the 2019 Maroondah Festival, several Indigenous community groups were invited to actively participate through a range of performances and stalls. Maroondah Movement for Reconciliation hosted a site and Djirri Djirri Dance Group performed traditional song and dance on the Main Stage. Although an Elder was unable to attend on the day, a Welcome to Country was scheduled to be performed on the main stage by an Elder of the Wurrundjiri Council.

Relevant action items:

- 2.5.5 Support and foster the involvement of Mullum Mullum Indigenous Gathering Place and Maroondah Movement for Reconciliation as part of the annual Maroondah Festival



Maroondah Occasional Care has developed a Reconciliation Action Plan specific to its centre



Focus Area 3: Opportunities

A new Reconciliation Action Plan for Maroondah Occasional Care

Maroondah Occasional Care has developed a Reconciliation Action Plan specific to its centre through Narragunnawali, an organisation that supports schools and early learning services to increase their knowledge and engagement with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture and works towards reconciliation.

The implementation of this action plan will assist to embed Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture into their programs with actions such as purchasing authentic resources to educate children and families, connecting to Country through art and craft experiences and creating connections with local branches of several ATSI services such as Victorian Aboriginal Child Care Association and Local Aboriginal Education Consultative Group.

Already, the Maroondah Occasional Care team has put together a rich and vibrant calendar of events and activities for their children and families to participate in during National Reconciliation Week 2020.

Relevant action item:

3.4.1 Invite schools and early learning centres to participate in Council-run Reconciliation events.

Arts and Cultural Development Strategy 2020 to 2025 endorsed

The *Arts and Cultural Development Strategy 2020 to 2025* was endorsed in March 2020, and integrates a range of Indigenous arts and cultural directions. The strategy was developed with significant consultation and input from Maroondah Arts Advisory Committee which includes Indigenous representation.

The Arts and Cultural Development team has had a strong connection with Indigenous community and artists in the past and this strategy will work towards solidifying the works of Indigenous artists, and the importance of Indigenous culture, within the community.



Relevant action items:

- 3.3 Identify and undertake arts orientated opportunities designed to enhance equity in outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples

Engagement with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander owned business

In addition to regular engagement with the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation, who are enlisted to perform Welcome to Country and Smoking ceremonies and cultural heritage assessments, a working group comprising multiple Council departments has been collaborating on the Experience Gallery within the Realm extension.

This project, which has been developed with the cultural advice from Aunty Janet Turpie-Johnstone, will see the permanent display of Indigenous artwork and design which have been commissioned from an Indigenous artist. Not only will this project facilitate new engagement between Council and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander owned business, but it will ensure there is recognition of Maroondah's Indigenous community, cultural heritage and values within our key facilities.

Relevant action items:

- 3.2.4 Develop at least one commercial relationship with an Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander owned business



What's coming up in the next 12 months?



Indigenous Australian singer and songwriter, Kutcha Edwards, with local students

Work commencing on engagement toolkit

A review of the current *Community Engagement Toolkit* is soon to be underway and will include development of guidelines for engaging with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. These guidelines will be considered by the Maroondah Reconciliation Action Plan working group to ensure they are relevant, specific and endorsed by the local community. This toolkit is scheduled for completion in mid-2021.

Relevant action item:

- 1.3.2 Develop and implement an engagement plan for undertaking relevant *Maroondah Innovate Reconciliation Action Plan 2018 to 2020* action items with local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders
- 1.4.4 Maintain a permanent Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples section in Council's corporate communications including Council's website
- 1.4.5 Promote Reconciliation through ongoing active engagement with all stakeholders

Promotion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander history

A Project Plan has been developed which outlines a direction for the promotion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander history of the Maroondah municipality. This plan addresses; the promotion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander history on the Maroondah City Council website, a project map of cultural sites of significance and physical monuments or recognitions at identified sites. Funding will now be sought to progress this project.

Relevant action item:

- 2.4.1 Seek external funding to work with local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and non-Indigenous organisations to document and promote the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander history of the Maroondah municipality
- 2.4.2 Seek external funding to undertake a project to map and document sites of cultural significance within Maroondah

Youth Services Best Practice Guidelines

Work has commenced to develop a Draft Best Practice Guidelines for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Inclusion protocol as part of a wider accessibility audit for Council's Youth Services team. These guidelines will be finalised in consultation with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations, with a specific focus on including the voices of young people and will contribute to greater inclusion and accessibility in youth programs and services.

Relevant action item:

- 3.6 Review the inclusivity and accessibility of Council services for young people in respect to certain groups including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people

Project plan for 2021 and beyond

A discussion paper has been developed to consider approaches for the next *Maroondah Reconciliation Action Plan* (MRAP), which includes learnings from the development and implementation of the *current plan*. This paper, which also highlights challenges and benchmarking from other Local Government Areas, will be used to provide recommendations as to the direction that Council will take.

Relevant action item:

- 4.3.1 Liaise with Reconciliation Australia and the MRAP Working Group to develop a new *Maroondah Innovate Reconciliation Action Plan* based on learnings, challenges and achievements. Send draft back to Reconciliation Australia for review and feedback

To contact Council






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Translating and Interpreter Service

13 14 50

National Relay Service (NRS)

13 36 77

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