



# WHITEHORSE

## Reconciliation Policy and Action Plan



2007–2010

Adopted by Council 19 February 2007

## Whitehorse Reconciliation Policy and Action Plan 2007-2010

If you require more information on the Whitehorse Reconciliation Policy and Action Plan please contact:

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### Cover Artwork by: Mandy Nicholson

#### Title: *“Recognition into the future”*

**Meaning:** The central image depicts a traditional Wurundjeri shield which represents this regions Indigenous culture.

The four thicker lines flowing into the centre represents the services, strategies and the commitment offered by the City of Whitehorse towards its Indigenous residents.

The four thinner lines show the flow of people coming in to take advantage of these services.

The central spiral (flowing water) represents the Councils recognition of the ‘spiritual relationship’ with country of their Indigenous residents.

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## Acknowledgement & Special Thanks

The City of Whitehorse would like to acknowledge the valuable contribution of members of the Whitehorse Reconciliation Policy Advisory Group and the Indigenous Gardens Reference Group in the development of this Policy and Action Plan.

### Whitehorse Reconciliation Policy Advisory Group

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Stewart Detez	Swinburne TAFE
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Lois Peeler	Whitehorse resident
Helen Killmier	City of Whitehorse
Bill Morrison	City of Whitehorse
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### Whitehorse Reconciliation Gardens Reference Group

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## Message from the Mayor



It gives me great pleasure to present the Whitehorse Reconciliation Policy and Action Plan 2007 – 2010. This three year Plan is a key document that outlines Council's ongoing commitment to improve the health, social and economic outcomes for Indigenous people who live, work, study and visit the City of Whitehorse thereby supporting Indigenous communities in the Eastern Region and furthering the process of Reconciliation.

Council adopted a comprehensive approach to the development of the Policy and Plan. This included a community engagement process involving Wurundjeri Elders, residents, Indigenous leaders, service providers, representatives of Whitehorse Friends for Reconciliation and local residents. A comprehensive public consultation process provided Council with clear indicators about issues of importance to Indigenous people and current and future needs of Indigenous Communities.

This Policy and Action Plan is designed to complement existing Council policies and objectives. The framework provides a broad planning approach to address issues both locally and regionally for Indigenous people. The Plan encompasses broader community and national goals and strategies that acknowledge and respect the traditional owners of the land and aims to address the health inequalities faced by Indigenous people.

I commend the Whitehorse Reconciliation Policy and Action Plan to you. Council looks forward to continuing to build partnerships to achieve better outcomes for Indigenous people that will advance the process of Reconciliation.

Mayor  
Cr John Koutras

## What is Reconciliation?

Reconciliation recognises the special place and culture of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as the First Australians, values their participation and provides equal life chances for all.

Reconciliation involves justice, recognition and healing. It's about helping all Australians move forward with a better understanding of the past and how the past affects the lives of Indigenous people today.

### Reconciliation Australia

*"My father said to me, shortly before he passed away, "Always remember - you are who you are, be proud of who you are, but you are no better than anyone else". I now see the dignity that was applied to these words: because they are about reconciliation. We can use the terms 'moving forward' and getting on with things', but for me it's about respecting each other's rights to be human, each other's rights to have an identity – and each other's rights to work together. Along with that comes recognising each other's culture - why we're different, why we have different beliefs and where that comes from."*

Joy Wandin Murphy  
Senior Elder of the Wurunjeri people

From *Respect, Rights, Recognition* Report and Reflections - Reconciliation Victoria, Local Government Forum 2004. Reprinted with permission.

## Indigenous History in Whitehorse

The Wurundjeri people are the traditional owners of the land now known as Whitehorse. The Wurundjeri are one of seven tribes of the Kulin Nation and collectively its members claimed all of that part of the Port Phillip region that was drained by the Yarra River and its tributaries. Woi wurrung is the traditional language of this group and Bunjil the eagle is their totem.

*Before European settlement, there were approximately 41 Aboriginal clans that lived in Victoria for at least 40,000 years. The Wurundjeri people lived all along the Yarra River from the river flats to its source and around the Mount Baw Baw regions. They inhabited the northern slopes of the Dandenongs and the area of Gardiners Creek that originates in the Blackburn district. Food was readily available around the Blackburn Lake Sanctuary because of the watercourse and the plants that grew nearby. Therefore the Wurundjeri people did not need to venture too far away from their campsites.*

*The word Wurundjeri was originally spelt Wurunjeri. This meant the Witchetty Grub People. Wurun is the river white gum often found along the Yarra and jerri is the grub that lived in that tree.*

Source: *Koorie Plants and Koorie people*, Nelly Zola & Beth Gott (1992).

Since the Dreamtime, Wurundjeri history has been passed down from generation to generation by word of mouth. Many of the stories have been lost or have faded due to the devastating effects of white settlement on the Indigenous population such as the introduction of disease, poor diet and the forced removal of people from their traditional lands and family in conjunction with the dismantling of traditional culture and language.

Despite these major cultural, social and environmental changes, Wurundjeri traditions and culture continue to grow in the City of Whitehorse.

The ongoing connection between the Wurundjeri people and their land is reflected in the writings of the plaque in the Nangnak Garden located at the City of Whitehorse Civic Offices in Nunawading.

*This land is ancient  
Sacred to the Wurundjeri people  
The traditional custodians  
Bunjil the eagle is our totem and  
creator*

*Born from the spirit of this land  
We belong to each other  
We are one*

*Through ceremony, ritual and lore  
Spiritually and culturally we are  
provided for*

*We listen and learn  
Our language is woi wurrung*

*With connection to the land  
Our spirit is strong  
There is a continuum*

Kim Wandoon,  
Wurundjeri Elder, May 2006

## Whitehorse City Profile and Indigenous Statistics

The City of Whitehorse extends across a physically large area of eastern Melbourne (64 sq km) including suburbs as diverse as Box Hill, Blackburn, Vermont, Forest Hill, Mitcham, Nunawading, Burwood, Surrey Hills and Mont Albert.

Major features of the City include the large high technology precinct in the Tally Ho area, the Melbourne campus of Deakin University, Box Hill TAFE, Box Hill Hospital, three major shopping centres and major transport hubs.

The number of people that identify as Indigenous in Whitehorse is now relatively small. Census data from 2001 records 243 Indigenous people living in Whitehorse although research indicates that a lack of trust in government data collection often results in this community being underrepresented statistically.

<b>Identity</b>	<b>Males</b>	<b>Females</b>	<b>Persons</b>
Aboriginal	105	102	207
Torres Strait Islander	12	12	24
Both	7	5	12
<b>Total</b>	<b>124</b>	<b>119</b>	<b>243</b>

## The National Context

In 1992 The Council of Australian Governments (COAG) joined in a National Commitment to Improved Outcomes in the Delivery of Programs and Services for Aboriginal people and Torres Strait Islanders.

The Council for Aboriginal Reconciliation was a national statutory authority from 1991 – 2001 that created two important documents that form the basis for local Reconciliation Policy today: the *Australian Declaration Towards Reconciliation* and the *Roadmap for Reconciliation*.

Following changes announced by the Prime Minister in January 2006, the Office of Indigenous Policy Coordination (OIPC) became part of the new Families, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs (FaCSIA) portfolio, formerly the Department of Family and Community Services (FaCS). These changes follow on from the Government's decision to abolish the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission (ATSIC) and the associated service-delivery agency, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Services (ATSIS). The Government's Indigenous programs are now administered by mainstream agencies, under a 'whole-of-government' approach.

Other key documents and Legislation that have impacted on the development of this Policy and Action Plan include:

- *Ask First – A guide to respecting Indigenous heritage places and values* (2002)
- *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Heritage Protection Act* (1984)
- *National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Safety Promotion Strategy* (2005)

## Indigenous Health in Victoria

This Policy and Action Plan is strongly linked to the Whitehorse Municipal Public Health Plan 2004 – 2006 that aims to address health inequalities in the Whitehorse community. Current evidence demonstrates that the health of the Aboriginal community is significantly poorer than the non-indigenous community.

Current Indicators of Indigenous Wellbeing, (Aboriginal affairs Victoria, April 2002) show that:

- 57 per cent of Victoria's Indigenous population is under 25 years of age (compared with 39 per cent non-Indigenous);
- 50 per cent of Indigenous people live outside Melbourne;
- Victorian Indigenous families have a lower median weekly family income (\$545) than other families (\$743);
- Of Indigenous labour force participants, 21 per cent are unemployed, more than double the unemployment rate for the total population;
- 40 per cent of the Indigenous population leave school at 15 to 16 years of age compared with 30 per cent of the total population;
- 53 per cent of Victoria's Indigenous people are much more likely to rent their homes than non-Indigenous (23 per cent);
- 25 per cent of Indigenous people live in public housing compared with 5 per cent of non-Indigenous people;
- Mortality rates are at least 2.5 times those of the total population and can be as high as 4 times the national rate;
- Admissions to hospitals are up to three times more frequent than for other Victorians;
- Indigenous children are nine times more likely to be involved in placement support services than in the general population of children;
- Indigenous Victorians are eleven times more likely to be imprisoned than non-Indigenous Victorians;
- Life expectancy is 20 years lower than for non-indigenous people being 56.3 for males and 62.8 years for females;
- There are twice as many low birth weight babies born to Aboriginal mothers and there are 2.5 times as many deaths among Aboriginal infants than non-Indigenous infants.

## Links to State Wide Legislation, Plans and Reports

Aboriginal Affairs Victoria (AAV) is a division of the Department of Victorian Communities and is responsible for all aspects of policy advice in relation to Aboriginal affairs in Victoria.

The AAV's Cultural Heritage branch is responsible for the management of policies and programs that impact on Aboriginal cultural heritage including the Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006 and plays a significant part in the administration of Aboriginal cultural heritage legislation at both the State and Federal level.

To increase opportunities for Indigenous Australians a number of agreements have been negotiated between the State Government and the Indigenous community and have been useful in the development of this Policy and Action Plan:

- *Yalca: A Partnership in Education and Training for the New Millennium* (2001);
- *Wur-cum barra: Victorian Public Sector Indigenous Employment Strategy* (2002);
- *Victorian Aboriginal Justice Agreement Phase 2 (AJA2)* (June 2006);
- *Victorian Home and Community Care (HACC) Program Manual* (2003);
- *Aboriginal Best Start – Status Report* (2004);
- *Toomnangi: Indigenous Communities and Local Government* (2002)
- *‘Long Ago, Here Today’: Developing an Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Management Strategy for Victoria* (2004);
- *Respect, Rights, Recognition: The next Steps towards Reconciliation* (2004);
- *Reconciliation Victoria Report and Reflections on the Local Government Forum* (4 March, 2004).

## **The Regional Context**

The Eastern metropolitan region is made up of the seven local government areas of the Cities of Whitehorse, Maroondah, Manningham, Monash, Boroondara, Knox and the Shire of Yarra Ranges. There are relatively low numbers of Indigenous people in each of the local government areas with the highest population being in Yarra Ranges. In total there are 2,200 Indigenous people in the region which make up approximately 9% of Victoria’s Indigenous population.

Members of the Indigenous community in the region have established the Mullum Mullum Indigenous Gathering Place, a Neighbourhood House in Croydon funded by Department of Human Services, to provide programs identified by Indigenous people. The Mullum Mullum Indigenous Gathering Place reflects the need for a centrally located point of association within the region. Other Indigenous specific services in the region include the Toor-Rong Aboriginal Corporation, the Aboriginal Health Service, Oonah Indigenous Arts Enterprises and Worawa Aboriginal College.

## **The Local Context**

The Whitehorse Reconciliation Policy and Action Plan 2007-2010 builds upon and further develops the City of Whitehorse Aboriginal Reconciliation Action Plans 2002-2005 and the Joint Statement of Commitment (Attachment 1). The Reconciliation Policy and Action plan represents a strategic framework for Council planning and service delivery and identifies priority areas to support and advance the reconciliation process into the future.

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## Links to the Council Plan 2004 – 2008

All Council plans are underpinned by Council's Vision Statement:

*We aspire to be an inclusive, supportive community with vibrant, outstanding and sustainable, natural, built, social and economic environments.*

In particular the Reconciliation Policy and Action Plan demonstrates a strong commitment to the following Council values:

- Consultation and Communication
- Democracy and Leadership
- Equity and Social Justice
- Integrity
- Openness and Accountability
- Sustainability
- Well being

The Policy and Action Plan aims to address inequalities faced by Indigenous communities and progress the process of reconciliation through implementation of the following Council objectives:

1. Provide responsible leadership and governance
2. Foster our local economy
3. Support our community
4. Care for our natural environment
5. Create sustainable urban environments

These direct links to the Council Plan 2004 – 2008 ensure that Indigenous issues are embedded in all Council planning documents such as:

- The Municipal Public Health Plan
- The Municipal Strategic Statement
- The Municipal Early Years Plan
- The Youth Plan
- The Positive Ageing Strategy
- The Municipal Strategic Statement

The Whitehorse Reconciliation Policy and Action Plan 2007-2010 has been organised into five key policy objectives as outlined below:

- Acknowledgement and Respect
- Culture and Heritage
- Access to Facilities and Services
- Economic Development
- Leadership and Advocacy

## Commitment to Reconciliation

The City of Whitehorse has an ongoing commitment towards Reconciliation into the future that is reflected in another plaque located in the Nangnak Garden at the Whitehorse Civic precinct in Nunawading. The wording is as follows:

We the City of Whitehorse and its citizens commit ourselves to the vision of the Council for Aboriginal Reconciliation.

*A united Australia that respects this land of ours;  
Values the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander heritage; and  
Provides justice and equity for all.*

*Let us all walk together; listen to and learn from each other; and ensure a better future for the generations to come.*

Indigenous Gardens Reference Group  
May 2006

# Whitehorse Reconciliation

## Action Plan

## Reconciliation Action Plan

### Support our community

Council will deliver a high standard of service provision and facilities that meet measured community needs, provide value for money, promote community spirit and celebrate Whitehorse's heritage and diversity.

### Policy Objective: Acknowledgement and Respect

To recognise, acknowledge and celebrate the Wurundjeri people as the traditional custodians of the land of Whitehorse and the unique cultural heritage of all Indigenous Australians.

Strategies	Actions	Responsibility
To publicly acknowledge and respect the contribution of Wurundjeri history within the City	Acknowledge the Wurundjeri as traditional owners of the land at identified Council, civic and community meetings and events	All Council departments
Raise community awareness of the meaning and significance of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander flags	Incorporate a <i>Welcome to Country</i> by a Wurundjeri Elder on Council's website	Wurundjeri Elders Communications
	Develop a flyer that explains the meaning and significance of <i>Welcome to Country</i> and <i>Acknowledgement of Country</i>	Wurundjeri Elders Communications Community Development
	Include a <i>Welcome to Country</i> by a Wurundjeri Elder in New Residents Kits	Community Development
Raise community awareness of the meaning and significance of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander flags	Fly the Aboriginal flag at the Council offices (Indigenous Garden) every day of the year and also fly the Torres Strait Islander flag during Sorry Day, Mabo Day, Reconciliation Week and NAIDOC Week	Community Development Civic Services
	Invite Wurundjeri Elders and the local community to participate in flag raising ceremonies at the beginning of Reconciliation Week and NAIDOC Week	Wurundjeri Elders Civic Services
	Provide information about the flags meaning and significance at Customer Services Centres	Community Development

Strategies	Actions	Responsibility
	Develop a pin depicting the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander flags with a card that explains their meaning and significance with the support of the Toor-Rong Aboriginal Community Development Employment Program Support Indigenous people to advocate for State government protocols to encourage the flying of the Aboriginal flag every day of the year through regional networks and the MAV Indigenous Issues Network Provide support for Wurundjeri Elders and leaders in their role as spokespeople being mindful of their regional responsibilities	Community Development  Community Development
Promote recognition and understanding of the Wurundjeri language, Woi-Wurrung	Consider and advocate where appropriate that Woi-Wurrung names be utilized for new streets, open spaces and other significant landmarks Continue to liaise with Wurundjeri Elders and implement established procedures with relevant Council departments to utilise Woi-Wurrung words for naming streets and sites	Community Development Civic Services Wurundjeri Elders  Civic Services Wurundjeri Elder responsible for language Victorian Council for Aboriginal Languages

### Policy objective: Culture and heritage

To strengthen and enrich the whole community through a greater understanding and appreciation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, culture, traditions and history.

Strategies	Actions	Responsibility
Increase awareness and participation in National Weeks that celebrate Indigenous culture past and present	Support local and regional NAIDOC Week celebrations and ensure Council representation at significant local and regional events	Community Development Communications The Mullum Mullum Indigenous Gathering Place

<b>Strategies</b>	<b>Actions</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>
	<p>Ensure Council and community participation in National Reconciliation Week and Sorry Day activities</p>	<p>Community Development Communications The Mullum Mullum Indigenous Gathering Place Whitehorse Friends for Reconciliation</p>
	<p>Promote local, regional and state-wide activities for Reconciliation Week and NAIDOC Week and provide information and displays through Council's Customer Services Centres, the Council website, local schools and the Whitehorse Manningham Regional library service</p> <p>Promote Council's Community Grants Scheme to local Indigenous organisations to support community events</p>	<p>Community Development Communications Whitehorse Friends for Reconciliation Community Development</p>
<p>Facilitate specific projects relevant to cultural and community life of Indigenous people</p>	<p>Update the Koorie Sites in Whitehorse brochure and promote to the community through schools, libraries and relevant Council activities</p> <p>Promote the Indigenous educational garden at Blackburn Lake Sanctuary to primary and secondary schools and continue to support activities of the Blackburn Lake Sanctuary Advisory Committee</p> <p>Promote the Nangnak Reconciliation Garden in the Civic precinct at Council events such as Australia Day and the Spring Festival</p> <p>Actively seek funding opportunities and develop partnerships with local Indigenous communities and organisations to develop new projects</p> <p>Maintain Corporate membership of the Koorie Heritage Trust</p>	<p>Community Development Communications Wurundjeri Elders Arts &amp; Recreation Development Arts &amp; Recreation Development Parks Advisory Committees Arts &amp; Recreation Development Community Development Community Development Community Development Arts &amp; Recreation Development</p>
<p>Profile Indigenous issues and the work of Indigenous organisations</p>	<p>Publicise positive actions and contributions of the Indigenous community through Council newsletters, displays and local media</p> <p>Continue to expand and exhibit the Indigenous art component of Council's art collection</p>	<p>Community Development Communications Arts &amp; Recreation Development Community Development Community Development Arts &amp; Recreation Development</p>

### Policy Objective: Access to Facilities and Services

To consider Indigenous community needs in all aspects of Council's strategic, economic and social planning to ensure accessible and culturally sensitive services; a high level of cultural awareness amongst Council staff; and the ongoing improvement of Indigenous programs and initiatives into the future.

Strategies	Actions	Responsibility
Ensure that urban planning and policy is responsive to the needs of Indigenous communities	Ensure that Wurrundjeri elders are consulted and involved in decision-making about planning decisions affecting sites of cultural significance and environmental protection and improvement initiatives in line with State government Heritage Legislation	Community Development Business and Economic Development
Facilitate equity of access to, and utilisation of, all Council facilities and services for Indigenous people	Increase awareness of Council services, facilities and supports for the local and regional Indigenous communities Support Indigenous organisations in the development and implementation of programs that contribute to environmental sustainability	All Council Departments EcoVision Team
Improve Indigenous health outcomes through health promotion activities	Ensure that Council's strategic plans include actions that address the needs of Indigenous communities and involve consultation with Indigenous people Undertake population research, and study current emerging trend data to enable better planning and service delivery Highlight Indigenous issues through the Inner East and Eastern Metropolitan Region Health Promotion Networks	All Council Departments Community Development Community Development
Ensure services are targeted, culturally sensitive and responsive to the needs of the Indigenous people	Ensure that the Municipal Public Health Plan incorporates health promotion for Indigenous communities Participate in the eastern region Aboriginal Health Promotion and Chronic Care Initiative Include Aboriginal artwork symbols in Council publications and on the Council website Promote Council events and services through Indigenous media, local media and Council's website Further develop Awareness Kits for Children's Services	Community Development Community Development Community Development Communications Communications Health & Family Services

<b>Strategies</b>	<b>Actions</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>
<p>Develop training programs and activities for Council staff to increase cultural awareness, develop confidence and promote inclusive practices</p>	<p>Utilise Indigenous Home and Community Care guidelines in Aged and Disability Services</p> <p>Implement appropriate staff development programs and training including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Include information on Indigenous cultural awareness in induction processes for all new Council staff</li> <li>• Cultural Awareness Training for all staff as a regular component of the staff training program</li> <li>• Cultural awareness raising for all staff at work based functions such as morning teas</li> <li>• Comprehensive cultural awareness training for mentors of Indigenous trainees</li> <li>• Development of resources and protocols to assist Council staff to be sensitive to Indigenous issues</li> <li>• Regular articles about Indigenous issues on the staff Intranet</li> <li>• Investigation of a staff 'skills exchange' program in conjunction with other appropriate organisations</li> <li>• Cr Clarke to follow up on induction information for new Councillors</li> </ul>	<p>Aged and Disability Services</p> <p>Community Development Organisation Development</p>
<p>Improve access to Indigenous specific regional services</p>	<p>Encourage linkages between Aboriginal services in the eastern region and Council such as legal, housing and health services</p>	<p>Community Development Health &amp; family Services Aged &amp; Disability Services</p>

### Foster our Local Economy

Council will work in partnership with local business and other stakeholders to create a thriving and sustainable local economy.

### Policy Objective: Economic Development

To facilitate economic development opportunities for Indigenous people within Council and the business community.

Strategies	Actions	Responsibility
Support and encourage Indigenous economic development	<p>Explore joint funding opportunities with relevant organisation to create Indigenous specific positions</p> <p>Provide ongoing support and mentoring for Indigenous trainees at the City of Whitehorse employed through the AFL Sports Ready and Jobs for Young People program</p> <p>Provide support for the Indigenous Tennis Program at Box Hill Senior Secondary College</p>	<p>Community Development Health &amp; family Services Aged &amp; Disability Services Relevant Council Departments</p> <p>Community Development Arts &amp; Recreation Development</p> <p>ParksWide</p>
Support and encourage training and work experience opportunities for Indigenous people	<p>Provide opportunities for Indigenous students and Community Development Employment Program participants through ongoing maintenance of the Whitehorse Indigenous gardens</p> <p>Promote Council's Business Week activities to the Indigenous community and highlight Indigenous businesses where appropriate</p> <p>Provide work experience placements for Indigenous TAFE and university students where appropriate</p> <p>Continue to explore opportunities and initiatives to promote the employment of Indigenous people within Council and related services</p>	<p>Development, Strategy and Business Services</p> <p>All Council departments Eastern Wurreker Network</p> <p>Community Development Eastern Wurreker Network</p>
Engage and employ Indigenous Australians in community events and arts projects where appropriate	<p>Include Indigenous leaders, performers, artists and musicians at significant Council events such as Senior Citizens festival, Children's Day and Spring Festival</p> <p>Utilise Indigenous catering services for appropriate events and forums</p> <p>Utilise Indigenous artists where appropriate</p>	<p>Community Development Arts &amp; Recreation Development</p> <p>Community Development Arts &amp; Recreation Development</p> <p>Arts &amp; Recreation Development</p>

Strategies	Actions	Responsibility
	In consultation, and with permission from Wurundjeri Elders, provide ongoing opportunities for art in public places that includes Wurundjeri symbols and motifs	Community Development Arts & Recreation Development

**Provide responsible Leadership and Governance**

Council will represent the interests of its community and will conduct its affairs openly and with integrity, reflecting the highest level of good management and governance.

**Policy Objective: Leadership and Advocacy**

Adopt a leadership and advocacy role on the rights and issues of Indigenous people and facilitate reciprocal relationships that enhance and encourage mutual understanding and partnership building between Council and Indigenous communities.

Strategies	Actions	Responsibility
Advocate for the rights and interests of Indigenous Australians and promote the principles of Reconciliation	<p>Advocate and support social justice for Indigenous Australians and the sustainability of local Indigenous programs and services through local, regional and state-wide networks</p> <p>Establish an ongoing Indigenous Advisory Committee to monitor the implementation of the Policy and Action Plan and support Indigenous initiatives</p> <p>Explore funding opportunities to resource an Indigenous facilitator to develop an Indigenous network between Councils in the region</p> <p>Further establish links with the Mullum Mullum Gathering Place and Indigenous Officers in relevant State government Departments where appropriate to improve regional coordination of services and significant events</p>	<p>Community Development</p> <p>Community Development Whitehorse Indigenous Policy Reference Group</p> <p>Community Development</p> <p>Community Development Mullum Mullum Indigenous Gathering Place</p>
Advance Council's commitment to the process of reconciliation	<p>Work in collaboration with local government networks to advance Reconciliation</p> <p>Work in partnership with Indigenous communities and Whitehorse Friends for Reconciliation to identify tangible actions to further the Reconciliation process</p>	<p>Community Development</p> <p>Community Development Indigenous organisations Whitehorse Friends of Reconciliation</p>

Strategies	Actions	Responsibility
	Promote the Indigenous garden projects as a Best practice model for engaging Indigenous communities	Community Development
	Support the regional coordination of Reconciliation groups and their activities	Community Development Whitehorse Friends for Reconciliation
	Ensure support for Council officers and key Indigenous leaders to attend relevant conferences	Community Development
Foster positive and productive relationships between the Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities	Encourage local community involvement for key Indigenous occasions	Community Development Civic Services
	Invite Wurundjeri Elders to speak at civic and community occasions where appropriate	Community Development Civic Services
	Provide opportunities for people from Indigenous communities to raise concerns and issues with Council	Community Development Civic Services
Promote opportunities for Indigenous people to participate in community consultation and decision making processes	Ensure Indigenous communities are invited to participate in planning for services, programs and events	All Council Departments
Update the Joint Statement of Commitment and explore opportunities to develop relationships with other Councils in the eastern region	Review Council's Joint Statement of Commitment to Indigenous Australians with the cities of Banyule, Manningham and Nillumbik	Community Development
	Continue to adapt Council policy documents in relation to the joint Statement of Commitment	Community Development
	Explore potential relationships with other Councils in the eastern region with a view to developing a revised Statement of Commitment	Community Development
	Support linkages between schools in the City of Whitehorse and the Local Area Consultative Group	Community Development

## Attachment 1

### Statement of Commitment to Indigenous Australians

In 1997, Whitehorse Council made a joint Statement of Commitment to Indigenous Australians with the Cities of Banyule, Manningham and Nillumbik:

#### The Councils recognise:

- The habitation of this land by local Indigenous people;
- The historical significance of sacred sites, traditional names and the contributions made by key Indigenous members to the history of this region;
- The value of the diversity and strength of Indigenous cultures to the heritage of all Australians;
- The importance of water to all peoples and in particular the Indigenous people's spiritual relationship with land and water.

#### The Councils support:

- The rights of all Indigenous people as outlined in the United Nations Declaration On The Rights of Indigenous peoples;
- The principles of equity and access for all members of the Indigenous community to culturally appropriate services and programs;
- The vision as expressed by the Council for Aboriginal Reconciliation of a "united Australia which respects this land of ours, values the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander heritage and provides justice and equity for us all."

#### The Councils Commit to:

- Advocacy on behalf of Indigenous members of our community to ensure the principles and commitments of this Statement are upheld;
- Fulfillment of an education role regarding the historical significance of Indigenous heritage in this region, and the current and future needs of our Indigenous communities;
- Implementing appropriate programs and activities displaying our involvement in ongoing national programs;
- Developing and promoting, as appropriate, Indigenous involvement in local events and celebrations of local and regional significance which respect the dignity and protocols of the local Indigenous community.

## References

- Aboriginal Affairs Victoria, Aboriginal Heritage Act, 2006
- Aboriginal Affairs Victoria, Current Indicators of Indigenous Wellbeing, April 2002
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